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THE POETICAL WORKS OF GEOFF. CHAUCER.

IN FOURTEEN VOLUMES.

THE MISCELLANEOUS PIECES

From *Urry's* Edition 1721,

THE CANTERBURY TALES

From *Tyrwhitt's* Edition 1775.

Grete well CHAUCER whan ye mete----
Of dittees and of songes glade,
The which he---made,
The londe fullfilled is over all. GOWER.

My maister CHAUCER---chiefe poete of Bretayne----
Whom all this londe schulde of ryght preferre,
Sith of our langage he was the lode-sterre----
That made first to dystylle and rayne
The gold dewe dropys of speche and eloquence
Into our tunge through his excellence. LYDGATE.

The honour of English tong is dede----
My mayster CHAUCER, floure of eloquence,
Mirrour of fructuous entendement,
Universel fadir in science----
This londis verray tresour and richesse----
The firste fynder of our fayre langage. OCCLEVE.

Venerabill CHAUCER, principall poete but pere,
Hevinly trumpet, orlege and regulere,
In eloquence balme, condict and diall,
Mylky fountane, clere strand, and rois riall,
Of fresche endite throw Albioun iland braid. DOUGLAS.

O reverend CHAUCER! rose of rethouris all,
As in oure toung flour imperial
That raise in Brittane evir, quha reidis right
Thou beiris of Makers the triumphs royall,
The fresche enamilt termes celestiall:
This mater couth haif illuminit full bricht,
Was thou nocht, of our Inglis all the light,
Surmounting every toung terrestriall
As far as Mayi's morrow dois midnight. DUNBAR.

VOL. III.

EDINBURG:
AT THE Apollo Press, BY THE MARTINS.
Anno 1782.

THE

POETICAL WORK[S]

OF

GEOFFREY CHAUCER.

VOL. III.

CONTAINING HIS

CANTERBURY TALES, *viz.*

THE WIF OF BATHES TALE,
THE FRERES TALE,
THE SOMPNOURES TALE,
THE CLERKES TALE,
THE MARCHANTES TALE,
THE SQUIERES TALE,
&c. &c. &c.

But natheles certain
I can right now no thrifty Tale sain,
But CHAUCER, (though he can but lewedly
On metres and on riming craftily)
Hath sayd hem in swiche English as he can
Of olde time, as knoweth many a man;
And if he have not sayd hem, leve brother,
In o book, he hath sayd hem in another----
Who so that wol his large Volume seke. TALES, *ver.* 4465.

Dan CHAUCER, well of English undefil'd,
On Fame's eternal bead-roll worthy to be fil'd----
Old Dan Geffrey, in whose gentle spright
The pure well-head of poetry did dwell----
He whilst he lived was the soveraigne head
Of shepherds all------ SPENSER.

Old CHAUCER, like the morning star,
To us discovers day from far;
His light those mists and clouds dissolv'd
Which our dark nation long involv'd;
But he descending to the shades
Darkness again the age invades. DENHAM.

CHAUCER, him who first with harmony inform'd
The language of our fathers--- His legends blithe
He sang of love or knighthood, or the wiles
Of homely life, thro' each estate and age
The fashions and the follies of the world
With cunning hand portraying-----
Him who in times------
Dark and untaught began with charming verse
To tame the rudeness of his native land. AKENSIDE.

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THE WIF OF BATHES PROLOGUE.

EXPERIENCE, though non auctoritee
Were in this world, is right ynough for me
To speke of wo that is in mariage;
For, Lordings, sin I twelf yere was of age
(Thanked be God that is eterne on live)
Husbondes at chirche dore have I had five,
(If I so often might han wedded be)
And all were worthy men in hir degree.

Ỽ. 5583.] I have already given my reasons for following the best mss. in placing this Prologue of The Wife of Bathe next to The Man of Lawes Tale, *Discourse, &c.* § 16. The want of a few verses to connect this Prologue with the preceding Tale was perceived long ago, and the defect was attempted to be supplied by the author of the following lines, which in ms. *B.* are prefixed to the common Prologue;

Oure Oost gan tho to loke up anon.
Gode men, quod he, herkeneth everichone,
As evere mote I drynke wyn or ale
This Marchant hath itold a mery Tale,
Howe Januarie hadde a lither jape,
His wyf put in his hood an ape.
But hereof I wil leve off as now.
Dame Wyf of Bathe, quod he, I pray you
Telle us a Tale now nexte after this.
Sir Oost, quod she, so God my soule blis
As I fully therto wil consente,
And also it is myn hole entente
To done yow alle disporte as that I can.
But holde me excused; I am a woman:
I can not reherse as these clerkes kune.
And riyt anon she hath hir Tale bygunne.
Experience, &c.

The same lines are in mss. *Bod.* €. and ζ. I print them here in order to justify myself for not inserting them in the text.

But me was told, not longe time agon is,
That sithen Crist ne went never but onis
To wedding in the Cane of Galilee,
That by that ilke ensample taught he me
That I ne shulde wedded be but ones.
Lo, herke eke, which a sharp word for the nones,
Beside a welle Jesu God and man
Spake in repreve of the Samaritan;
Thou hast yhadde five husbonds, sayde he,
And thilke man that now hath wedded thee
Is not thyn husbond. Thus said he certain,
What that he ment therby I can not sain;
But that I aske why that the fifthe man
Was non husbond to the Samaritan?
How many might she have in mariage?
Yet herd I never tellen in min age
Upon this noumbre diffinitioun;
Men may devine and glosen up and doun.
But wel I wot expresse withouten lie
God bad us for to wex and multiplie;
That gentil text can I wel understond:
Eke wel I wot he sayd that min husbond
Shuld leve fader and moder and take to me;
But of no noumbre mention made he
Of bigamie or of octogamie;
Why shuld men than speke of it vilanie?
Lo here the wise King, Dan Salomon,
I trow he hadde wives mo than on,

(As wolde God it leful were to me
To be refreshed half so oft as he)
Which a gift of God had he for alle his wives?
No man hath swiche that in this world on live is.
God wot this noble king, as to my witte,
The firste night had many a mery fitte
With eche of hem, so wel was him on live.
Blessed be God that I have wedded five;
Welcome the sixthe whan that ever he shall;
For sith I wol not kepe me chaste in all,
Whan min husbond is fro the world ygone
Som Cristen man shal wedden me anon;
For than the apostle saith that I am fre
To wedde a' Goddes half wher it liketh me;
He saith that to be wedded is no sinne;
Better is to be wedded than to brinne.
  What rekketh me though folk say vilanie
Of shrewed Lamech and his bigamie?

℣. 5626. *I have wedded five*] After this verse the six following are in mss. *C.* 1, *HA. C.* 2, and in edit. *Ca.* 2;

> Of whiche I have pyked out the beste
> Bothe of here nether purs and of here cheste.
> Diverse scoles maken parfyt clerkes,
> And diverse practyk in many sondry werkes
> Maken the werkman parfyt sekirly:
> Of five husbondes scoleryng am I;
> Welcome the sixthe, &c.

If these lines are not Chaucer's they are certainly more in his manner than the generality of the imitations of him. Perhaps he wrote them, and afterwards blotted them out. They come in but awkwardly here, and he has used the principal idea in another place, *March.* T. ver. 9301.

I wot wel Abraham was an holy man,
And Jacob eke, as fer as ever I can,
And eche of hem had wives mo than two,
And many another holy man alfo.
Wher can ye feen in any maner age
That highe God defended mariage
By expreffe word? I pray you telleth me,
Or wher commanded he virginitee?
  I wot as wel as ye, it is no drede,
The apoftle, whan he fpake of maidenhede,
He faid that precept therof had he non;
Men may confeille a woman to ben on,
But confeilling is no commandement;
He put it in our owen jugement.
  For hadde God cõmanded maidenhede,
Than had he dampned wedding out of drede;
And certes if ther were no fede yfôwe
Virginitee than wherof fhuld it growe?
  Poule dorfte not commanden at the left
A thing of which his maifter yaf non heft.
The dart is fette up for virginitee,
Catch who fo may, who renneth beft let fee.
But this word is not take of every wight,
But ther as God wol yeve it of his might.
I wot wel that the apoftle was a maid,
But natheles, though that he wrote and faid
He wold that every wight were fwiche as he,
All n'is but confeil to virginitee.

And for to ben a wif he yaf me leve,
Of indulgence, so n'is it non repreve
To wedden me, if that my make die,
Withoute exception of bigamie;
All were it good no woman for to touche,
(He ment as in his bed or in his couche)
For peril is both fire and tow to assemble;
Ye know what this ensample may resemble.
This is all and som, he held virginitee
More parfit than wedding in freeltee:
(Freeltee clepe I, but if that he and she
Wold lede hir lives all in chastitee)
I graunt it wel, I have of non envie
Who maidenhed preferre to bigamie;
It liketh hem to be clene in body and gost:
Of min estat I wol not maken bost.
For wel ye know a lord in his houshold
Ne hath nat every vessell all of gold:
Som ben of tree, and don hir lord service.
God clepeth folk to him in sondry wise,

℣. 5677. *I graunt it wel, I have non envie—Though maidenhed preferre bigamie*] So these two verses stand, without any material difference, in all the mss. If they are right we must understand *preferre* to signify the same as *be preferred to*. Knowing no example of such a construction I have ventured at an alteration of the text. It might have been as well, perhaps, to have left the first line untouched, and to have corrected the second only thus;

Though maidenhed *be preferr'd to* bigamie.

℣. 5681. *a lord in his houshold*] See 2 *Tim*. ii. 20.

And everich hath of God a propre gift,
Som this, ſom that, as that him liketh ſhift.
Virginitee is gret perfection,
And continence eke with devotion;
But Criſt, that of perfection is welle,
Ne bade not every wight he ſhuld go ſelle
All that he had and yeve it to the poure,
And in ſwiche wiſe follow him and his lore:
He ſpake to hem that wold live parfitly,
And, Lordings, (by your leve) that am nat I:
I wol beſtow the flour of all myn age
In th' actes and the fruit of mariage.
  Tell me alſo to what concluſion
Were membres made of generation,
And of ſo parfit wiſe a wight ywrought?
Truſteth me wel they were nat made for nought.
Gloſe who ſo wol, and ſay bothe up and doun,
That they were made for purgatioun
Of urine, and of other thinges ſmale,
And eke to know a female from a male:
And for non other cauſe? ſay ye no?
The experience wot wel it is not ſo.
So that the clerkes be not with me wroth
I ſay this, that they maked ben for both,
This is to ſayn, for office and for eſe
Of engendrure, ther we not God diſpleſe.
Why ſhuld men elles in hir bookes ſette
That man ſhal yelden to his wif hire dette?

Now wherwith ſhuld he make his payement
If he ne uſed his ſely inſtrument?
Than were they made upon a creature
To purge urine, and eke for engendrure.
But I ſay not that every wight is hold,
That hath ſwiche harneis as I to you told,
To gon and uſen hem in engendrure;
Than ſhuld men take of chaſtitee no cure.
Criſt was a maide, and ſhapen as a man,
And many a ſeint, ſith that this world began,
Yet lived they ever in parfit chaſtitee?
I n'ill envie with no virginitee.
Let hem with bred of pured whete be fed,
And let us wives eten barly bred:
And yet with barly bred, Mark tellen can,
Our Lord Jeſu refreſhed many a man.
In ſwiche eſtat as God hath cleped us
I wol perſever, I n'am not precious.
In wifhode wol I uſe min inſtrument
As frely as my Maker hath it ſent.
If I be dangerous God yeve me ſorwe,
Min huſbond ſhal it have both even and morwe,
Whan that him liſt come forth and pay his dette.
An huſbond wol I have, I wol not lette,
Which ſhal be both my dettour and my thrall,
And have his tribulation withall
Upon his fleſh, while that I am his wif.
I have the power during all my lif

Upon his propre body and nat he;
Right thus the apoſtle told it unto me,
And bad our huſbonds for to love us wel:
All this ſentence me liketh every del.
  Up ſtert the Pardoner, and that anon;
Now, Dame, quod he, by God and by Seint John
Ye ben a noble prechour in this cas:
I was about to wed a wif, alas!
What? ſhuld I bie it on my fleſh ſo dere?
Yet had I lever wed no wif to-yere.
  Abide, quod ſhe, my Tale is not begonne;
Nay, thou ſhalt drinken of another tonne,
Er that I go, ſhal ſavor worſe than ale:
And whan that I have told thee forth my Tale
Of tribulation in mariage,
Of which I am expert in all min age,
(This is to ſayn myſelf hath ben the whippe)
Than maieſt thou cheſen wheder thou wolt ſippe
Of thilke tonne that I ſhal abroche:
Beware of it er thou to neigh approche,
For I ſhal tell enſamples mo than ten.
Who ſo that n'ill beware by other men
By him ſhal other men corrected be:
Thiſe ſame wordes writeth Ptholomee,

ꝟ. 5764. *writeth Ptholomee*] In the margin of mſ. C. 1 is the following quotation; "Qui per alios non corrigitur, alii "per ipſum corrigentur:" but I cannot find any ſuch paſſage in The Almageſte. I ſuſpect that The Wife of Bathes copy of Ptolemy was very different from any that I have been able to meet with. See another quotation from him, ver. 7906.

Rede in his Almajeſte, and take it there.
Dame, I wold pray you, if your will it were,
Sayde this Pardoner, as ye began
Tell forth your Tale, and ſpareth for no man,
And techeth us yonge men of your practike.
Gladly, quod ſhe, ſin that it may you like.
But that I pray to all this compagnie,
If that I ſpeke after my fantaſie,
As taketh not a greefe of that I ſay,
For min entente is not but for to play.
Now, Sires, than wol I tell you forth my Tale.
As ever mote I drinken win or ale
I ſhal ſay ſoth, the huſbondes that I had
As three of hem were good and two were bad.
The three were goode men and riche and olde;
Unnethes mighten they the ſtatute holde
In which that they were bounden unto me;
Ye wot wel what I mene of this parde.
As God me helpe I laugh whan that I thinke
How pitouſly a-night I made hem ſwinke,
But by my fay I tolde of it no ſtore:
They had me yeven hir lond and hir treſore;
Me neded not do lenger diligence
To win hir love or don hem reverence.
They loved me ſo wel by God above
That I ne tolde no deintee of hir love.
A wiſe woman wol beſie hire ever in on
To geten hir love ther as ſhe hath non.

But ſith I had hem holly in min hond,
And that they hadde yeven me all hir lond,
What ſhuld I taken kepe hem for to pleſe,
But it were for my profit or min eſe?
I ſet hem ſo a-werke by my fay,
That many a night they ſongen Wala wa!
The bacon was not fet for hem I trow
That ſom men have in Eſſex at Donmow.
I governed hem ſo wel after my lawe
That eche of hem ful bliſful was and fawe
To bringen me gay thinges fro the feyre:
They were ful glade whan I ſpake hem fayre;
For God it wot I chidde hem ſpitouſly.
Now herkeneth how I bare me proprely.
  Ye wiſe wives, that can underſtond,
Thus ſhul ye ſpeke, and bere hem wrong on hond,
For half ſo boldely can ther no man
Sweren and lien as a woman can.
(I ſay not this by wives that ben wiſe,
But if it be whan they hem miſaviſe.)

ṽ. 5799. *The bacon---at Donmow*] See Blount's *Ant. Tenures*, p. 162. This whimſical inſtitution was not peculiar to Dunmow; there was the ſame in Bretagne; "A l'Abbaie Sainct "Melaine, près Rennes, y a, plus de ſix cens ans ſont, un coſté "de lard encore tout frais et non corrompu; et neantmoins "voué et ordonné aux premiers, qui par an et jour enſemble "mariez ont veſcu ſans debat, grondement, et ſans s'en re"pentir." *Contes d'Eutrap*, t. ii. p. 161.

ṽ. 5810. *Sweren and lien*] *Rom. de la R.* ver. 19013;

Car plus hardiment que nulz homs
Certainement jurent et mentent.

ṽ. 5811. (*I ſay not this*] This parentheſis ſeems to be rather belonging to Chaucer himſelf than to The Wife of Bathe.

A wise wif, if that she can hire good,
Shal beren hem on hond the cow is wood,
And taken witnesse of hire owen mayd
Of hir assent; but herkeneth how I sayd.
• Sire olde Kaynard, is this thin aray?
Why is my neigheboures wif so gay?
She is honoured over al wher she goth,
I sit at home, I have no thrifty cloth.
What dost thou at my neigheboures hous?
Is she so faire? art thou so amorous?
What, rownest thou with our maide? *benedicite!*
Sire olde Lechour, let thy japes be.
And if I have a gossib or a frend,
(Withouten gilt) thou chidest as a fend
If that I walke or play unto his hous.
Thou comest home as dronken as a mous,

℣. 5814. *Shal beren hem on hond*] Shall make them believe falsely the cow is wood. The latter words may either signify that the cow is mad or made of wood: which of the two is the preferable interpretation it will be safest not to determine till we can discover the old story to which this phrase seems to be a proverbial allusion.

℣. 5817. *Sire olde Kaynard*] *Cagnard* or *caignard* was a French term of reproach which seems to have been originally derived from *canis*, *Menage*, in v. In the following speech it would be endless to produce all Chaucer's imitations; the beginning is from the fragment of Theophrastus quoted by St. Jerome, c. *Jovin.* l. i, and by John of Salisbury, *Polycrat.* l. viii. c. xi. See also *Rom. de la R.* ver. 8967. *et suiv.*

And precheſt on thy benche with evil preſe:
Thou ſayſt to me, It is a gret meſchiefe
To wed a poure woman for coſtage;
And if that ſhe be riche of high parage,
Than ſayſt thou that it is a tourmentrie
To ſoffre hire pride and hire melancolie:
And if that ſhe be faire, thou veray knave,
Thou ſayſt that every holour wol hire have;
She may no while in chaſtitee abide
That is aſſailled upon every ſide.
Thou ſayſt ſom folk deſire us for richeſſe,
Som for our ſhape, and ſom for our fairneſſe,
And ſom for ſhe can eyther ſing or dance,
And ſom for gentilleſſe and daliance,
Som for hire hondes and hire armes ſmale:
Thus goth all to the devil by thy tale.
Thou ſayſt men may not kepe a caſtel wal,
It may ſo long aſſailled be over al.
And if that ſhe be foul, thou ſayſt that ſhe
Coveteth every man that ſhe may ſee;
For as a ſpaniel ſhe wol on him lepe
Til ſhe may finden ſom man hire to chepe.
Ne non ſo grey goos goth ther in the lake
(As ſayſt thou) that wol ben withoute a make:
And ſayſt it is an hard thing for to welde
A thing that no man wol his thankes helde.
  Thus ſayſt thou, lorel, whan thou goſt to bed,
And that no wiſe man nedeth for to wed,

Ne no man that entendeth unto heven.
With wilde thonder dint and firy leven
Mote thy welked nekke be to-broke.
Thou sayst that dropping houses and eke smoke,
And chiding wives, maken men to flee
Out of hir owen hous. A, *benedicite!*
What aileth swiche an old man for to chide?
Thou sayst we wives wol our vices hide
Til we be fast, and than we wol hem shewe.
Wel may that be a proverbe of a shrewe.
Thou sayst that oxen, asses, hors, and houndes,
They ben assaied at diverse stoundes,
Basines, lavoures, or that men hem bie,
Spones, stooles, and all swiche husbondrie,
And so ben pottes, clothes, and aray,
But folk of wives maken non assay
Til they ben wedded, olde dotard shrewe,
And than, sayst thou, we wol our vices shewe.
Thou sayst also that it displeseth me
But if that thou wolt preisen my beautee,
And but thou pore alway upon my face,
And clepe me Faire Dame in every place;
And but thou make a feste on thilke day
That I was borne, and make me fresh and gay;
And but thou do to my norice honour,
And to my chamberere within my bour,

✠ 5882. *chamberere*] A chambermaid, Fr. See 8695, 8853;

Son varlet et sa *chamberiere*,
Aussi sa seur et sa nourrice
Et sa mere, si moult n'est nice.
Rom. de la R. 14480.

And to my faders folk and myn allies:
Thus sayſt thou, olde barel ful of lies.
And yet alſo of our prentis Jankin,
For his criſpe here, ſhining as gold ſo fin,
And for he ſquiereth me both up and doun,
Yet haſt thou caught a falſe ſuſpection:
I wol him nat though thou were ded to-morwe.
But tell me this, Why hideſt thou with ſorwe
The keies of thy cheſt away fro me?
It is my good as wel as thin parde.
What, weneſt thou make an idiot of our Dame?
Now by that Lord that cleped is Seint Jame
Thou ſhalt nat bothe, though that thou were wood,
Be maiſter of my body and of my good;
That on thou ſhalt forgo maugre thin eyen.
What helpeth it of me to enquere and ſpien?
I trow thou woldeſt locke me in thy cheſte.
Thou ſhuldeſt ſay, Fayr wif, go wher thee leſte;
Take your diſport; I wol nat leve no tales;
I know you for a trewe wif, Dame Ales.
We love no man that taketh kepe or charge
Wher that we gon; we wol be at our large.
Of alle men ybleſſed mote he be
The wiſe aſtrologien Dan Ptholomee,
That ſayth this proverbe in his Almageſte,
Of alle men his wiſdom is higheſte
That rekketh not who hath the world in hond.
By this proverbe thou ſhalt wel underſtond,

Have thou ynough, what thar thee rekke or care
How merily that other folkes fare?
For certes, olde dotard, by your leve,
Ye ſhullen have queint right ynough at eve.
He is to gret a nigard that wol werne
A man to light a candel at his lanterne;
He ſhal have never the leſſe light parde:
Have thou ynough thee thar not plainen thee.
  Thou ſayſt alſo if that we make us gay
With clothing and with precious array
That it is peril of our chaſtitee:
And yet with forwe thou enforceſt thee,
And ſayſt thiſe wordes in the apoſtles name;
In habit made with chaſtitee and ſhame
Ye women ſhul appareile you, (quod he)
And nat in treſſed here and gay perrie,
As perles, ne with gold, ne clothes riche.
  After thy text ne after thy rubriche
I wol not work as mochel as a gnat.
Thou ſayſt alſo I walke out like a cat;
For who ſo wolde ſenge the cattes ſkin
Than wol the cat wel dwellen in hire in;
And if the cattes ſkin be ſleke and gay
She wol nat dwellen in hous half a day,
But forth ſhe wol, or any day be dawed,
To ſhew hire ſkin and gon a caterwawed.

℣. 5923. *in the apoſtles name*] See 1 *Tim.* ii. 9.

This is to ſay, if I be gay, ſire ſhrewe,
I wol renne out my borel for to ſhewe.
Sire olde fool, what helpeth thee to ſpien?
Though thou pray Argus with his hundred eyen
To be my wardecorps, as he can beſt,
In faith he ſhal not kepe me but me leſt:
Yet coude I make his berd, ſo mote I the.
 Thou ſayeſt eke that ther ben thinges three,
Which thinges gretly troublen all this erthe,
And that no wight ne may endure the ferthe:
O lefe ſire ſhrewe, Jeſu ſhort thy lif.
 Yet precheſt thou, and ſayſt, An hateful wif
Yrekened is for on of thiſe meſchances.
Be ther non other maner reſemblances
That ye may liken your parables to
But if a ſely wif be on of tho?
 Thou likeneſt eke womans love to helle,
To barrein lond ther water may not dwelle.
 Thou likeneſt it alſo to wilde fire;
The more it brenneth the more it hath deſire
To conſume every thing that brent wol be.
 Thou ſayeſt right as wormes ſhende a tre
Right ſo a wif deſtroieth hire huſbond;
This knowen they that ben to wives bond.
 Lordings, right thus, as ye han underſtond,
Bare I ſtifly min old huſbondes on hond,
That thus they ſaiden in hir dronkenneſſe;
And all was falſe but as I toke witneſſe

On Jankin, and upon my nece alſo.
O Lord! the peine I did hem and the wo,
Ful gilteles, by Goddes ſwete pine,
For as an hors I coude bite and whine;
I coude plain, and I was in the gilt,
Or elles oftentime I had ben ſpilt.
Who ſo firſt cometh to the mill firſt grint;
I plained firſt, ſo was our werre yſtint.
They were ful glad to excuſen hem ful blive
Of thing the which they never agilt hir live.
Of wenches wold I beren hem on hond
Whan that for ſike unnethes might they ſtond,
Yet tikeled I his herte for that he
Wend that I had of him ſo gret chiertee:
I ſwore that all my walking out by night
Was for to eſpien wenches that he dight:
Under that colour had I many a mirth;
For all ſwiche wit is yeven us in our birth;
Deceite, weping, ſpinning, God hath yeven
To women kindly while that they may liven.
And thus of o thing I may avaunten me,
At th' ende I had the beter in eche degree
By ſleight or force, or by ſom maner thing,
As by continual murmur or grutching,
Namely a-bed; ther hadden they meſchance;
Ther wold I chide, and don hem no pleſance:
I wold no lenger in the bed abide
If that I felt his arme over my ſide,

Til he had made his raunſon unto me,
Than wold I ſoffre him do his niceteе:
And therfore every man this Tale I tell,
Winne who ſo may, for all is for to ſell.
With empty hond men may no haukes lure;
For winning wold I all his luſt endure,
And maken me a feined appetit,
And yet in bacon had I never delit,
That maked me that ever I wold hem chide;
For though the Pope had ſitten hem beſide
I wold not ſpare hem at hir owen bord,
For by my trouthe I quitte hem word for word.
As helpe me veray God omnipotent,
Tho I right now ſhuld make my teſtament,
I ne owe hem not a word that it n'is quit;
I brought it ſo abouten by my wit
That they muſt yeve it up as for the beſt,
Or elles had we never ben in reſt;
For though he loked as a wood leon
Yet ſhuld he faille of his concluſion.
Than wold I ſay, Now, goode lefe, take kepe;
How mekely loketh Wilkin oure ſhepe!
Come ner my ſpouſe, and let me ba thy cheke;
Ye ſhulden be al patient and meke,
And han a ſwete ſpiced conſcience,
Sith ye ſo preche of Jobes patience.
Suffreth alway ſin ye ſo wel can preche,
And but ye do, certain we ſhal you teche

That it is faire to han a wif in pees.
On of us two moſt bowen doucelees;
And ſith a man is more reſonable
Than woman is ye moſten ben ſuffrable.
What aileth you to grutchen thus and grone?
Is it for ye wold have my queint alone?
Why take it all; lo, have it every del:
Peter, I ſhrew you but ye love it wel:
For if I wolde ſell my *belle choſe*
I coude walke as freſhe as is a roſe,
But I wol kepe it for your owen toth.
Ye be to blame, by God I ſay you ſoth.
  Swiche maner wordes hadden we on hond.
Now wol I ſpeken of my of fourthe huſbond.
  My fourthe huſbonde was a revellour,
This is to ſayn, he had a paramour,
And I was yonge and ful of ragerie,
Stibborne and ſtrong, and joly as a pie;
Tho coude I dancen to an harpe ſmale,
And ſing ywis as any nightingale,
Whan I had dronke a draught of ſwete wine.
Metellius, the foule cherle, the ſwine,
That with a ſtaf beraft his wif hire lif
For ſhe drank wine, though I had ben his wif
Ne ſhuld he not have daunted me fro drinke;
And after wine of Venus moſt I thinke;

℣. 6042. *Metellius*] This ſtory is told by Pliny, *Nat. Hiſt.* l. xiv. c. 13, of one Mecenius; but Chaucer probably followed Valerius Maximus, l. vi. c. 3.

For al so siker as cold engendreth hayl
A likerous mouth most han a likerous tayl.
In woman vinolent is no defence,
This knowen lechours by experience.
But, Lord Crist! whan that it remembreth me
Upon my youth, and on my jolitee,
It tikeleth me about myn herte rote:
Unto this day it doth myn herte bote,
That I have had my world as in my time.
But age, alas! that all wol envenime,
Hath me beraft my beautee and my pith;
Let go, farewel, the devil go therwith!
The flour is gon, ther n'is no more to tell;
The bren as I best may now moste I fell.
But yet to be right mery wol I fond.
Now forth to tellen of my fourthe husbond.
I say I had in herte gret despit
That he of any other had delit:
But he was quit by God and by Seint Joce:
I made him of the same wood a croce,
Not of my body in no foule manere,
But certainly I made folk swiche chere
That in his owen grese I made him frie
For anger and for veray jalousie.
By God, in erth I was his Purgatorie,
For which I hope his soule be in glorie:

℣. 6049. *In woman vinolent*] *Rom. de la R.* 14222;
Car puisque femme est enyvree
El n'a point en soy de deffence.—
℣. 6065. *Seint Joce*] Or *Josse*. Sanctus Judocus was a saint of Ponthieu, *Vocab. Hagiol.* prefixed to Menage, *Etymol. Fr.*

For, God it wote, he ſate ful oft and ſonge
When that his ſho ful bitterly him wronge;
Ther was no wight, ſave God and he, that wiſte
In many a wiſe how ſore that I him twiſte.
He died whan I came fro Jeruſalem,
And lith ygrave under the rode-beem;
All is his tombe not ſo curious
As was the ſepulcre of him Darius,
Which that Appelles wrought ſo ſotelly:
It is but waſt to bury hem precioufly.
Let him farewel, God give his ſoule reſt,
He is now in his grave and in his cheſt.
  Now of my fifthe huſbonde wol I telle:
God let his ſoule never come in helle:
And yet was he to me the moſte ſhrew;
That fele I on my ribbes all by rew,
And ever ſhal unto min ending day:
But in our bed he was ſo freſh and gay,
And therwithall he coude ſo wel me gloſe,
Whan that he wolde han my *belle choſe*,
That though he had me bet on every bon
He coude win agen my love anon.
I trow I loved him the bet, for he
Was of his love ſo dangerous to me.
We wimmen han, if that I ſhal not lie,
In this matere a queinte fantaſie.
Waite, what thing we may nat lightly have
Therafter wol we cry all day and crave.

Forbede us thing and that deſiren we;
Preſe on us faſt and thanne wol we flee.
With danger uttren we all our chaffare;
Gret prees at market maketh dere ware,
And to gret chepe is holden at litel priſe;
This knoweth every woman that is wiſe.
  My fifthe huſbonde, God his ſoule bleſſe,
Which that I toke for love and no richeſſe,
He ſomtime was a clerk of Oxenforde,
And had left ſcole, and went at home at borde
With my goſſib, dwelling in oure toun,
God have hire ſoule! hire name was Aliſoun.
She knew my herte and all my privetee
Bet than our pariſh preeſt, ſo mote I the:
To hire bewried I my conſeil all,
For had my huſbond piſſed on a wall,
Or don a thing that ſhuld have coſt his lif,
To hire, and to another worthy wif,
And to my nece, which that I loved wel,
I wold have told his conſeil every del:
And ſo I did ful often, God it wote,
That made his face ful often red and hote
For veray ſhame, and blamed himſelf for he
Had told to me ſo gret a privetee.
  And ſo befell that ones in a Lent
So often times I to my goſſib went,
For ever yet I loved to be gay,
And for to walke in March, April, and May,

From hous to hous, to heren ſondry tales)
That Jankin clerk, and my goſſib Dame Ales,
And I myſelf, into the feldes went.
Myn huſbond was at London all that Lent:
I had the better leiſer for to pleie,
And for to ſee, and eke for to be ſeie
Of luſty folk. What wiſt I wher my grace
Was ſhapen for to be, or in what place?
Therfore made I my viſitations
To vigilies and to proceſſions,
To prechings eke, and to thiſe pilgrimages,
To playes of miracles, and mariages,
And wered upon my gay ſkarlet gites.
Thiſe wormes, ne thiſe mothes, ne thiſe mites,
Upon my paraille frett hem never a del;
And woſt thou why? for they were uſed wel.
  Now wol I tellen forth what happed me.
I ſay that in the feldes walked we
Till trewely we had ſwiche daliance
This clerk and I, that of my purveance
I ſpake to him, and ſaid him how that he,
If I were widewe, ſhulde wedden me.
For certainly, I ſay for no bobance,
Yet was I never without purveance

℣. 6137. *viſitations*] *Rom. de la R.* 12492;
Souvent voiſe a la mere Egliſe,
Et face *viſitations*
Aux nopces, aux proceſſions,
Aux jeux, aux feſtes, aux caroles.—
℣. 6151. *bobance*] Boaſting pride, Fr. " En orgueil et en *bo-*

Of mariage, ne of other thinges eke:
I hold a mouſes wit not worth a leke
That hath but on hole for to ſterten to,
And if that faille than is all ydo.
  I bare him on hond he had enchanted me,
(My dame taughte me that ſubtiltee)
And eke I ſayd I mette of him all night,
He wold han ſlain me as I lay upright,
And all my bed was ful of veray blood;
But yet I hope that ye ſhuln do me good,
For blood betokeneth gold, as me was taught.
And al was falſe, I dremed of him right naught,
But as I folwed ay my dames lore
As wel of that as of other thinges more.
  But now, Sire, let me ſee, what ſhall I ſain?
A ha! by God I have my Tale again.
Whan that my fourthe huſbonde was on bere
I wept algate and made a ſory chere,
As wives moten, for it is the uſage,
And with my coverchefe covered my viſage;
But for that I was purveyed of a make
I wept but ſmal, and that I undertake.
To chirche was myn huſbond born a-morwe
With neigheboures that for him maden ſorewe,
And Jankin oure clerk was on of tho:
As helpe me God, whan that I ſaw him go

bans," *Froiſſart*, v. iv. c. 70. In the editt. it is *boſtance*. The thought in the next lines is taken from *Rom. de la R.* 13914;

Moult a ſouris povre recours,
Et met en grand peril la druge,
Qui n'a qu'ung partuys a refuge.

After the bere me thought he had a paire
Of legges and of feet so clene and faire
That all my herte I yave unto his hold.
He was, I trow, a twenty winter old,
And I was fourty, if I shal say soth,
But yet I had alway a coltes toth.
Gat-tothed I was, and that became me wele;
I had the print of Seint Venus sele.
As helpe me God I was a lusty on,
And faire and riche, and yonge, and wel begon;
And trewely, as min husbondes tolden me,
I had the beste queint that mighte be,
For certes I am all Venerian
In feling, and my herte is Martian:
Venus me yave my lust and likerousnesse,
And Mars yave me my sturdy hardinesse.
Min ascendent was Taure, and Mars therinne:
Alas, alas! that ever love was sinne!
I folwed ay min inclination
By vertue of my constellation;
That made me that I coude nat withdraw
My chambre of Venus from a good felaw;
Yet have I Martes merke upon my face,
And also in another privee place:

Ỽ. 6191—4.] These four lines are wanting in mss. *A. Ask.* 1, 2, and several others; and so are the eight lines from ver. 6201 to ver. 6208 incl.: they certainly might very well be spared.

For God so wisly be my salvation
I loved never by no discretion,
But ever folwed min appetit,
All were he shorte, longe, blacke, or white:
I toke no kepe, so that he liked me,
How poure he was, ne eke of what degree.
What shulde I saye? but at the monthes ende
This joly clerk Jankin, that was so hende,
Hath wedded me with gret solempnitee,
And to him yave I all the lond and fee
That ever was me yeven therbefore,
But afterward repented me ful sore.
He n'olde suffre nothing of my list:
By God he smote me ones with his fist,
For that I rent out of his book a lefe,
That of the stroke myn ere wex al defe.
Stibborne I was as is a leonesse,
And of my tonge a veray jangleresse;
And walke I wold, as I had don beforn,
Fro hous to hous, although he had it sworn,
For which he oftentimes wold preche,
And me of olde Romaine gestes teche.

ỿ. 6216. *with his fist*] Ms. *A.* reads—*on the lyste*—and so does ed. *Ca.* 2, with the addition of (what was at first a marginal gloss) *on the cheke.* In support of this reading it may be observed that Sir Thomas More, among many Chaucerian phrases, has this in his *Merry Jest of a Sergeant*, &c.

And *with his fist*
Upon the *lyst*
He gave him such a blow.—

How he Sulpitius Gallus left his wif,
And hire forſoke for terme of all his lif,
Not but for open-heded he hire ſay
Loking out at his dore upon a day.
Another Romaine told he me by name,
That for his wif was at a ſommer game
Without his weting he forſoke hire eke.
And than wold he upon his Bible ſeke
That ilke proverbe of Eccleſiaſte,
Wher he commandeth, and forbedeth faſte,
Man ſhal not ſuffer his wif go roule aboute.
Than wold he ſay right thus withouten doute,
Who ſo that bildeth his hous all of ſalwes,
And priketh his blind hors over the falwes,
And ſuffereth his wif to go ſeken halwes,
Is worthy to be honged on the galwes.
But all for nought; I ſette not an hawe
Of his proverbes ne of his olde ſawe;

ỳ. 6227. *open-heded*] This is literally from *Val. Max.* l. vi. c. 3: "Uxorem dimiſit, quod eam capite aperto foris verſatam "cognoverat." He gives the reaſon of this ſeverity; "Lex enim "tibi meos tantum præfinit oculos, quibus formam tuam "approbes. His decoris inſtrumenta compara: his eſto ſpe- "cioſa," &c.

ỳ. 6230. *a ſommer game*] This expreſſion, I ſuppoſe, took its riſe from the ſummer being the uſual ſeaſon for games. It is uſed in *P. P.* fol. 27;

I have lever here an harlotry or *a ſomers game*—

This ſtory is alſo from *Val. Max.* l. vi. c. 3; "P. Sempronius "Sophus—conjugem repudii notâ affecit, nihil aliud quam ſe "ignorante ludos auſam ſpectare."

Ne I wold not of him corrected be.
I hate hem that my vices tellen me,
And ſo do mo of us (God wote) than I.
This made him wood with me all utterly;
I n'olde not forbere him in no cas.
  Now wol I ſay you ſoth, by Seint Thomas,
Why that I rent out of his book a leſe,
For which he ſmote me ſo that I was deſe.
  He had a book that gladly night and day
For his diſport he wolde it rede alway;
He cleped it Valerie and Theophraſt,
And with that book he lough alway ful faſt.
And eke ther was a clerk ſomtime at Rome,
A cardinal, that highte Seint Jerome,
That made a book again Jovinian,
Which book was ther, and eke Tertullian,
Criſippus, Trotula, and Helowis,
That was abbeſſe not fer fro Paris,

ỽ. 6253. *Valerie and Theophraſt*] Some account has been given of theſe two treatiſes in the *Diſcourſe*, &c. n. 19. As to the reſt of the contents of this volume, Hieronymus *contra Jovinianum*, and Tertullian *de Pallio*, are ſufficiently known; and ſo are the Letters of Eloiſa and Abelard, the Parables of Solomon, and Ovid's Art of Love. I know of no *Trotula* but one, whoſe book "Curandarum ægritudinum muliebrium ante, in, " et poſt partum," is printed *int. Medicos antiquos*, Ven. 1547. What is meant by *Criſippus* I cannot gueſs.

ỽ. 6258. *Which book was ther*] I have here departed from the mſſ. which all read—In *which book ther was* eke.—Perhaps, however, it might be ſufficient to put a full ſtop after Jovinian.

And eke the Paraboles of Salomon,
Ovides Art, and bourdes many on;
And alle thiſe were bonden in o volume.
And every night and day was his cuſtume
(Whan he had leiſer and vacation
From other wordly occupation)
To reden in this book of wikked wives:
He knew of hem mo legendes and mo lives
Than ben of goode wives in the Bible.
  For truſteth wel it is an impoſſible
That any clerk wol ſpeken good of wives,
(But if it be of holy ſeintes lives)
Ne of non other woman never the mo.
Who peinted the leon, telleth me who?
By God if wimmen hadden written ſtories,
As clerkes han, within hir oratories,
They wold have writ of men more wikkedneſſe
Than all the merke of Adam may redreſſe.
The children of Mercury and of Venus
Ben in hir werking ful contrarious.
Mercury loveth wiſdom and ſcience,
And Venus loveth riot and diſpence;
And for hir divers diſpoſition
Eche falleth in others exaltation:

℣. 6284. *exaltation*] In the old aſtrology a planet was ſaid to be in its *exaltation* when it was in that ſign of the zodiack in which it was ſuppoſed to exert its ſtrongeſt influence; the oppoſite ſign was called its dejection, as in that it was ſuppoſed to be weakeſt. To take the inſtance in the text, the *exaltation* of Venus was in Piſces, [See alſo ver. 10587,] and her de-

As thus; God wote Mercury is desolat
In Pisces, wher Venus is exaltat,
And Venus falleth wher Mercury is reised,
Therfore no woman of no clerk is preised.
The clerk whan he is old, and may nought do
Of Venus werkes not worth his old sho,
Than siteth he doun and writeth in his dotage
That wimmen cannot kepe hir mariage.
But now to purpos why I tolde thee
That I was beten for a book parde.
  Upon a night Jankin, that was our sire,
Red on his book as he sate by the fire,
Of Eva first, that for hire wikkednesse
Was all mankinde brought to wretchednesse,
For which that Jesu Crist himself was slain,
That bought us with his herte blood again.
  Lo here expresse of wimmen may ye find
That woman was the losse of all mankind.
  Tho redde he me how Sampson lost his heres,
Sleping his lemman kitte hem with hire sheres,
Thurgh whiche treson lost he both his eyen.
  Tho redde he me, if that I shal not lien,

jection of course in Virgo; but in Virgo was the *exaltation* of Mercury;

> She is the welthe and the *rysynge*,
> The lust, the joy, and the lykynge,
> Unto Mercury.—

Gower, *Conf. Amant.* l. vii. fol. 147. So in ver. 10098, Cancer is called *Joves exaltation.*

ỽ. 6303. *Tho redde he*] Most of the following instances are mentioned in the *Epistola Valerii ad Rufinum de non ducendâ uxore.* See also *Rom. de la R.* 9140, 9615, *& suiv.*

Of Hercules, and of his Deianire,
That cauſed him to ſet himſelf a-fire.
  Nothing forgat he the care and the wo
That Socrates had with his wives two;
How Xantippa caſt piſſe upon his hed.
This ſely man ſat ſtill as he were ded;
He wiped his hed; no more dorſt he ſain
But, Er the thonder ſtint ther cometh rain.
  Of Paſiphae, that was the Quene of Crete,
For ſhrewedneſſe him thought the tale ſwete.
Fie! ſpeke no more (it is a griſely thing)
Of hire horrible luſt and hire liking.
  Of Clitemneſtra, for hire lecherie
That falſely made hire huſbond for to die,
He redde it with ful good devotion.
  He told me eke for what occaſion
Amphiorax at Thebes loſt his lif:
My huſbond had a legend of his wif
Eriphile, that for an ouche of gold
Hath privela unto the Grekes told
Wher that hire huſbond hidde him in a place,
For which he had at Thebes ſory grace.
  Of Lima told he me, and of Lucie;
They bothe made hir huſbondes for to die,

ỽ. 6329. *Of Lima—and of Lucie*] In the *Epiſtola Valerii*, &c. mſ. *Reg.* 12. *D.* iii, the ſtory is told thus; "*Luna* virum ſuum "interfecit quem nimis odivit: *Lucilia* ſuum quem nimis ama-"vit. Illa ſponte miſcuit aconita: hæc decepta furorem pro-"pinavit pro amoris poculo." *Lima* and *Luna* in many mſſ. are only diſtinguiſhable by a ſmall ſtroke over the *i*, which may be eaſily overlooked where it is, and ſuppoſed where it is not.

That on for love, that other was for hate.
Lima hire hufbond on an even late
Enpoyfoned hath, for that fhe was his fo:
Lucia likerous loved hire hufbond fo,
That for he fhuld alway upon hire thinke
She yave him fwiche a maner love-drinke
That he was ded er it were by the morwe:
And thus algates hufbondes hadden forwe.
  Than told he me how on Latumeus
Complained to his felaw Arius
That in his gardin growed fwiche a tree,
On which he faid how that his wives three
Honged hemfelf for hertes defpitous.
O leve brother! quod this Arius,
Yeve me a plant of thilke bleffed tree,
And in my gardin planted fhal it be.
  Of later date of wives hath he redde,
That fom han flain hir hufbondes in hir bedde,
And let hir lechour dight hem all the night,
While that the corps lay in the flore upright;
And fom han driven nailes in hir brain,
While that they flepe, and thus they han hem flain;
Som han hem yeven poyfon in hir drink:
He fpake more harm than herte may bethinke.
  And therwithall he knew of mo proverbes
Than in this world ther growen gras or herbes.

℣. 6339. *Latumeus*] In mff. *Afk.* 1, 2, it is *Latynius*; in the *Epiftola Valerii* juft cited, *Pavorinus flens ait Arrio.*—
℣. 6355. *mo proverbes*] For the following aphorifms fee *Prov.* 6

Bet is (quod he) thin habitation
Be with a leon or a foule dragon
Than with a woman uſing for to chide.
Bet is (quod he) high in the roof abide
Than with an angry woman doun in the hous,
They ben ſo wikked and contrarious:
They haten that hir huſbondes loven ay.
He ſayd a woman caſt hire ſhame away
Whan ſhe caſt of hire ſmock; and forther mo,
A faire woman, but ſhe be chaſt alſo,
Is like a gold ring in a ſowes noſe.
Who coude wene or who coude ſuppoſe
The wo that in min herte was and the pine?
And whan I ſaw he n'olde never fine
To reden on this curſed book all night,
Al ſodenly three leves have I plight
Out of his book, right as he redde, and eke
I with my fiſt ſo toke him on the cheke
That in oure fire he fell backward adoun;
And he up ſterte as doth a wood leoun,
And with his fiſt he ſmote me on the hed,
That in the flore I lay as I were ded.
And whan he ſaw how ſtille that I lay
He was agaſt, and wold have fled away,
Til at the laſt out of my ſwough I brayde.
O! haſt thou ſlain me, falſe theef? I ſayde,

xxi. 9. 19, and xi. 22. The obſervation in ver. 6364 is in *Herodotus*, b. i. p. 5, ed. *Weſſeling*.

And for my lond thus haſt thou mordred me?
Er I be ded yet wol I kiſſen thee.
And nere he came, and kneled faire adoun,
And ſayde, Dere ſuſter Aliſoun!
As helpe me God I ſhal thee never ſmite:
That I have don it is thyſelf to wite;
Foryeve it me, and that I thee beſeke.
And yet eftſones I hitte him on the cheke,
And ſayde, Theef, thus much am I awreke.
Now wol I die, I may no longer ſpeke.
  But at the laſt, with mochel care and wo,
We fell accorded by ourſelven two.
He yaf me all the bridel in min hond
To han the governance of hous and lond,
And of his tonge and of his hond alſo,
And made him brenne his book anon right tho.
  And whan that I had getten unto me
By maiſtrie all the ſoverainetee,
And that he ſayd, Min owen trewe wif,
Do as thee liſt the terme of all thy lif;
Kepe thin honour, and kepe eke min eſtat;
After that day we never had debat.
God helpe me ſo, I was to him as kinde
As any wif fro Denmark unto Inde,
And al ſo trewe, and ſo was he to me:
I pray to God that ſit in majeſtee
So bliſſe his ſoule, for his mercy dere.
Now wol I ſay my Tale if ye wol here.

The Frere lough whan he had herd all this:
Now, Dame, quod he, ſo have I joye and blis,
This is a long preamble of a Tale.
And whan the Sompnour herd the Frere gale,
Lo (quod this Sompnour) Goddes armes two,
A Frere wol entermete him evermo:
Lo, goode men, a flie and eke a Frere
Wol fall in every diſh and eke matere.
What ſpekeſt thou of preambulatioun?
What? amble or trot, or pees, or go ſit doun:
Thou letteſt our diſport in this matere.
Ye, wolt thou ſo, Sire Sompnour? quod the Frere;
Now by my faith I ſhal, er that I go,
Tell of a Sompnour ſwiche a Tale or two,
That all the folk ſhal laughen in this place.
Now elles, Frere, I wol beſhrewe thy face,
(Quod this Sompnour) and I beſhrewe me
But if I telle Tales two or thre
Of Freres, or I come to Sidenborne,
That I ſhal make thin herte for to morne,
For wel I wot thy patience is gone.
Our Hoſte cried, Pees, and that anon;

℣. 6414. *the Sompnour herd the Frere gale*] The ſame word occurs below, ver. 6918, "and let the Sompnour *gale*." In both places it ſeems to be uſed metaphorically. *Galan*, Sax. ſignifies *canere*. It is uſed literally in The Court of Love, ver. 1357, where the nightingale is ſaid—to crie and *gale*; hence its name *nightegale* or *nightengale*. In the Iſland. *at gala* is *ululare*, *Galli more exclamare*; and *Hana gal*, *Gallicinium*. *Gudm. And. Lex. Iſland.*

And ſayde, Let the woman tell hire Tale;
Ye fare as folk that dronken ben of ale.
Do, Dame, tell forth your Tale, and that is beſt.
  Al redy, Sire, quod ſhe, right as you leſt,
If I have licence of this worthy Frere.
  Yes, Dame, quod he, tell forth, and I wol here.

THE WIF OF BATHES TALE.

In olde dayes of the King Artour,
Of which that Bretons ſpeken gret honour,
All was this lond fulfilled of Faerie;
The Elf quene with hire joly compagnie

The Wif of Bathes Tale] A bacheler of King Arthur's court is enjoined by the Queen, upon pain of death, to tell what thing it is that women do moſt deſire. At length he is taught it by an old woman, whom he is enforced to marry. *Urry.*

℣. 6439. *King Artour*] I hope that Chaucer, by placing his Elf-quene in the dayes of King Artour, did not mean to intimate that the two monarchies were equally fabulous and viſionary. Maſter Wace has judged more candidly of the exploits of our Britiſh hero;

> Ne tut menſonge, ne tut veir;
> Ne tut folie, ne tut ſaveir.
> Tant unt li conteor conte,
> E li fableor tant fable,
> Pur les contes enbelecér,
> Ke tut unt fait fable ſembler. *Le Brut*, mſ. *Cotton*, *Vitell. A.* 7.

℣. 6441. *Faerie*] *Féerie*, Fr. from *fée*, the French name for thoſe fantaſtical beings which in the Gothick languages are called Alfs or Elves. The correſponding names to *fée* in the other romance dialects are *fata*, Ital. and *hada*, Span.; ſo that it is probable that all three are derived from the Lat. *fatum*, which in the barbarous ages was corrupted into *fatus* and *fata*. See *Menage*, in v. *Fée*. *Du Cange*, in v. *Fadus*.——Our ſyſtem of Faerie would have been much more complete if all our ancient writ-

Danced ful oft in many a grene mede.
This was the old opinion as I rede;

ers had taken the fame laudable pains to inform us upon that head that Gervafe of Tilbery has done, *Ot. Imp. Dec.* iii. c. 61, 2. He mentions two fpecies of dæmons in England which I do not recollect to have met with in any other author. The firft are thofe "Quos Galli Neptunos, Angli Portunos, nominant." Of the others he fays—"Eft in Angliâ quoddam dæmonum "genus, quod fuo idiomate Grant nominant adinftar pulli "equini anniculi, tibiis erectum, oculis fcintillantibus," &c. ——This laft feems fo have been a dæmon *fui generis*, but the *Portunus* appears to have refembled the *Gobelin*, as defcribed by *Orderic. Vital.* l. v. p. 556: fpeaking of the miracles of St. Taurinus at Evreux in Normandy he fays—"Dæmon "enim, quem de Dianæ phano expulit, adhuc in eâdem urbe "degit, et in variis frequenter formis apparens neminen lædit. "Hunc vulgus *Gobelinum* appellat, et per merita Sancti Tau-"rini ab humanâ læfione coercitum ufque hodie affirmat."—In the fame manner Gervafe fays of the Portuni, "Id illis in-"fitum eft, ut obfequi poffint et obeffe non poffint." He adds indeed an exception; "Verum unicum quafi modulum no-"cendi habent. Cum enim inter ambiguas noctis tenebras An-"gli folitarii quandoque equitant, *Portunus* nonnunquam in-"vifus equitanti fe fe copulat, et cum diutius comitatur eun-"tem, tandem loris arreptis equum in lutum ad manum du-"cit, in quo dum infixos volutatur, *Portunus* exiens *cachin-"num facit*, et fic huiufcemodi ludibrio humanam fimplicita-"tem deridet."—This is exactly fuch a prank as our *Hob* (or *Hop*) *goblin* was ufed to play. See the *Midfum. Night's Dream*, act ii. fc. 1, and Drayton's *Nymphidia* *.--It fhould be obferved that the *Portuni* (according to Gervafe) were of the true Faery fize; "ftaturâ pufilli, dimidium pollicis non habentes." But

* I fhall here correct a miftake of my own in the *Difc.* &c. n. 23. I have fuppofed that Shakefpeare might have followed Drayton in his Faery fyftem. I have fince obferved that Don Quixote (which was not publifhed till 1605) is cited in The Nymphidia, whereas we have an edition of The Midfum. Night's Dream in 1600; fo that Drayton undoubtedly followed Shakefpeare.

I ſpeke of many hundred yeres ago,
But now can no man ſee non elves mo;
For now the grete charitee and prayeres
Of limitoures and other holy freres,
That ſerchen every land and every ſtreme,
As thikke as motes in the ſonne beme,
Bliſſing halles, chambres, kichenes, and boures,
Citees and burghes, caſtles highe and toures,
Thropes and bernes, ſhepenes and dairies,
This maketh that ther ben no Faeries:
For ther as wont to walken was an elf,
Ther walketh now the limitour himſelf
In undermeles and in morweninges,
And ſayth his matines and his holy thinges
As he goth in his limitatioun.
Women may now go ſafely up and doun,

then indeed they were "ſenili vultu, facie corrugatâ." In *Dec.* i. c. 18, he deſcribes another ſpecies of harmleſs dæmons called *Folleti*; *Eſprits Follets*, Fr. *Folletti*, Ital.----The *Incubus*, mentioned below, ver. 6462, was a Faery of not quite ſo harmleſs a nature. He ſucceeded to the ancient *Fauni*, and like them was ſuppoſed to inflict that oppreſſion which goes under the name of the *ephialtes* or *nightmare*. Pliny calls the ephialtes *Faunorum in quiete ludibria*, *N. H.* l. 25. x. The *Incubus* however, as Chaucer inſinuates, exerted his powers for love as well as for hate, *Gervaſ. Tilber. Dec.* i. c. 17; "Vidimus quoſ-"dam Dæmones tanto Zelo mulieres amare quod ad inaudita "prorumpunt ludibria, et cum ad concubitum earum acce-"dunt mirâ mole eas opprimunt, nec ab aliis videntur."

ỽ. 6457. *undermeles*] The undermele, *i. e. undern-mele*, was the dinner of our anceſtors. See the n. on ver. 8136.

In every buſh, and under every tree,
Ther is non other Incubus but he,
And he ne will don hem no diſhonour.
  And ſo befell it that this King Artour
Had in his hous a luſty bacheler,
That on a day came riding fro river:
And happed that, alone as ſhe was borne,
He ſaw a maiden walking him beforne,
Of which maid he anon, maugre hire hed,
By veray force beraft hire maidenhed:
For which oppreſſion was ſwiche clamour,
And ſwiche purſuite unto the King Artour,
That damned was this knight for to be ded
By cours of lawe, and ſhuld have loſt his hed,
(Paraventure ſwiche was the ſtatute tho)
But that the quene and other ladies mo
So longe praieden the king of grace,
Til he his lif him granted in the place,

℣. 6466. *came riding fro river*] Or *fro the river*, as it is in ſome mſſ.: it means from hawking at waterfowl, *Froiſſ.* v. i. c. 140; "Le Comte de Flandres eſtoit tousjours *en riviere*—un "jour advint qu'il alla voller *en la riviere*—et getta ſon Fau- "connier un faucon *apres le heron*, et le Comte auſſi un."---So in c. 210, he ſays that Edw. III. had with him in his army---- "trente fauconniers à cheval, chargez d'oiſeaux, et bien ſoi- "xante couples de forts chiens et autant de levriers: dont il "alloit, chacun jour ou en chace ou *en riviere*, ainſi que il "luy plaiſoit." Sire Thopas is deſcribed as following this knightly ſport, ver. 13665;

He coude hunte at the wilde dere,
And ride on hauking *for the rivere*,
With grey goſhauk on honde.

And yaf him to the quene, all at hire will
To cheſe whether ſhe wold him ſave or ſpill.
The quene thanketh the king with al hire might;
And after this thus ſpake ſhe to the knight,
Whan that ſhe ſaw hire time upon a day.
Thou ſtandeſt yet (quod ſhe) in ſwiche array,
That of thy lif yet haſt thou not ſeuretee;
I grant thee lif if thou canſt tellen me
What thing is it that women moſt deſiren:
Beware, and keppe thy nekke bone from yren.
And if thou canſt not tell it me anon,
Yet wol I yeve thee leve for to gon
A twelvemonth and a day to ſeke and lere
An anſwer ſuffiſant in this matere;
And ſeuretee wol I have, or that thou pace,
Thy body for to yelden in this place.
Wo was the knight, and ſorweſully he ſiketh:
But what? he may not don all as him liketh.
And at the laſt he cheſe him for to wende,
And come agen right at the yeres ende
With ſwiche anſwer as God wold him purvay,
And taketh his leve, and wendeth forth his way.
He ſeketh every hous and every place,
Wher as he hopeth for to finden grace,
To lernen what thing women loven moſte;
But he ne coude ariven in no coſte
Wher as he mighte find in this matere
Two creatures according in fere.

Som ſaiden women loven beſt richeſſe,
Som ſaiden honour, ſom ſaiden jolineſſe,
Som riche array, ſom ſaiden luſt a-bedde,
And oft time to be widewe and to be wedde.
Some ſaiden that we ben in herte moſt eſed
Whan that we ben yflatered and ypreiſed.
He goth ful nigh the ſoth, I wol not lie;
A man ſhal winne us beſt with flaterie;
And with attendance and with beſineſſe
Ben we ylimed bothe more and leſſe.
And ſom men ſaiden that we loven beſt
For to be free, and do right as us leſt,
And that no man repreve us of our vice,
But ſay that we ben wiſe and nothing nice:
For trewely ther n'is non of us all,
If any wight wol claw us on the gall,
That we n'ill kike for that he ſaith us ſoth;
Aſſay, and he ſhal find it that ſo doth:
For be we never ſo vicious withinne
We wol be holden wiſe and clene of ſinne.
And ſom ſaiden that gret delit han we
For to be holden ſtable and eke ſecre,
And in o purpos ſtedfaſtly to dwell,
And not bewreyen thing that men us tell;
But that tale is not worth a rake-ſtele.
Parde we women connen nothing hele,
Witneſſe on Mida; wol ye here the Tale?
Ovide, amonges other thinges ſmale,

Said Mida had under his longe heres
Growing upon his hed two aſſes eres,
The whiche vice he hid, as he beſte might,
Ful ſubtilly from every mannes ſight,
That ſave his wif ther wiſt of it no mo;
He loved hire moſt, and truſted hire alſo;
He praied hire that to no creature
She n'olde tellen of his diſfigure.
  She ſwore him Nay, for all the world to winne
She nolde do that vilanie ne ſinne,
To make hire huſbond han ſo foule a name:
She n'olde not tell it for hire owen ſhame.
But natheles hire thoughte that ſhe dide
That ſhe ſo longe ſhuld a conſeil hide;
Hire thought it ſwal ſo ſore aboute hire herte,
That nedely ſom word hire muſt aſterte;
And ſith ſhe dorſt nat telle it to no man,
Doun to a mareis faſte by ſhe ran;
Til ſhe came ther hire herte was a-fire:
And as a bitore bumbleth in the mire,
She laid hire mouth unto the water doun.
Bewrey me not, thou water, with thy ſoun,
Quod ſhe; to thee I tell it, and no mo,
Min huſbond hath long aſſes eres two.
Now is min herte all hole, now is it out,
I might no lenger kepe it out of dout.
Here may ye ſee, though we a time abide,
Yet out it moſte; we can no conſeil hide.

The remenant of the Tale, if ye wol here,
Redeth Ovide, and ther ye may it lere.
This knight, of which my Tale is ſpecially,
Whan that he ſaw he might not come therby,
(This is to ſayn, what women loven moſt)
Within his breſt ful ſorweful was his goſt.
But home he goth, he mighte not ſojourne;
The day was come that homward muſt he turne.
And in his way it happed him to ride,
In all his care, under a foreſt ſide,
Wheras he ſaw upon a dance go
Of ladies foure-and-twenty, and yet mo.
Toward this ilke dance he drow ful yerne,
In hope that he ſom wiſdom ſhulde lerne;
But certainly er he came fully there
Yvaniſhed was this dance he n'iſte not wher;
No creature ſaw he that bare lif,
Save on the grene he ſaw ſitting a wif,
A fouler wight ther may no man deviſe.
Againe this knight this olde wif gan ariſe,
And ſaid, Sire Knight, here forth ne lith no way.
Tell me what that ye ſeken by your fay,
Paraventure it may the better be:
Thiſe olde folk con mochel thing, quod ſhe.
My leve mother, quod this knight, certain
I n'am but ded but if that I can fain
What thing it is that women moſt deſire:
Coude ye me wiſſe I wold quite wel your hire.

Plight me thy trouthe here in myn hond, quod ſhe,
The nexte thing that I requere of thee
Thou ſhalt it do, if it be in thy might,
And I wol tell it you or it be night.
  Have here my trouthe, quod the knight, I graunte.
  Thanne, quod ſhe, I dare me wel avaunte
Thy lif is ſauf, for I wol ſtond therby,
Upon my lif the quene wol ſay as I.
Let ſee which is the proudeſt of hem alle,
That wereth on a kerchef or a calle,
That dare ſayn nay of that I ſhal you teche.
Let us go forth withouten lenger ſpeche.
  Tho rowned ſhe a piſtel in his ere,
And bad him to be glad, and have no fere.
  Whan they ben comen to the court, this knight
Said he had hold his day as he had hight,
And redy was his anſwere, as he ſaide.
Ful many a noble wif, and many a maide,
And many a widewe, for that they ben wiſe,
(The quene hireſelf ſitting as a juſtice)
Aſſembled ben his anſwer for to here,
And afterward this knight was bode appere.
  To every wight commanded was ſilence,
And that the knight ſhuld tell in audience
What thing that worldly women loven beſt.
This knight ne ſtood not ſtill as doth a beſt,
But to this queſtion anon anſwerd
With manly vois, that all the court it herd.

My liege Lady, generally, quod he,
Women deſiren to han ſoverainetee,
As well over hir huſbond as hir love,
And for to ben in maiſtrie him above.
This is your moſt deſire, though ye me kille;
Doth as you liſt, I am here at your wille.
In all the court ne was ther wif ne maide,
Ne widewe, that contraried that he ſaide,
But ſaid he was worthy to han his lif.
And with that word up ſtert this olde wif
Which that the knight ſaw ſitting on the grene.
Mercy, quod ſhe, my ſoveraine lady Quene,
Er that your court depart, as doth me right.
I taughte this anſwer unto this knight,
For which he plighte me his trouthe there
The firſte thing I wold of him requere
He wold it do, if it lay in his might.
Before this court than pray I thee, Sire Knight,
Quod ſhe, that thou me take unto thy wif,
For wel thou woſt that I have kept thy lif:
If I ſay falſe ſay nay upon thy fay.
This knight anſwered, Alas and wala wa!
I wot right wel that ſwiche was my beheſt.
For Goddes love as cheſe a new requeſt:
Take all my good, and let my body go.
Nay than, quod ſhe, I ſhrewe us bothe two:
For though that I be olde, foule, and pore,
I n'olde for all the metal ne the ore

That under erthe is grave, or lith above,
But if thy wif I were and eke thy love.
My love! quod he; nay, my dampnation.
Alas! that any of my nation
Shuld ever ſo foule diſparaged be.
But all for nought; the end is this, that he
Conſtrained was he nedes muſt hire wed,
And taketh this olde wif, and goth to bed.
Now wolden ſom men ſayn paraventure,
That for my negligence I do no cure
To tellen you the joye and all the array
That at the feſte was that ilke day.
To which thing ſhortly anſweren I ſhal:
I ſay ther was no joye ne feſte at al,
Ther n'as but hevineſſe and mochel ſorwe;
For prively he wedded hire on the morwe,
And all day after hid him as an oule,
So wo was him his wif loked ſo foule.
Gret was the wo the knight had in his thought
Whan he was with his wif a-bed ybrought;
He walweth, and he turneth to and fro.
This olde wif lay ſmiling evermo,
And ſaid, O dere huſbond, *benedicite!*
Fareth every knight thus with his wif as ye?
Is this the lawe of King Artoures hous?
Is every knight of his thus dangerous?
I am your owen love, and eke your wif,
I am ſhe which that ſaved hath your lif,

And certes yet did I you never unright;
Why fare ye thus with me this firſte night?
Ye faren like a man had loſt his wit.
What is my gilt? for Goddes love tell it,
And it ſhal ben amended if I may.
  Amended! quod this knight, alas! nay, nay,
It wol not ben amended never mo;
Thou art ſo lothly, and ſo olde alſo,
And therto comen of ſo low a kind,
That litel wonder is though I walwe and wind;
So wolde God min herte wolde breſt.
  Is this, quod ſhe, the cauſe of your unreſt?
  Ye certainly, quod he, no wonder is.
  Now Sire, quod ſhe, I coude amend all this,
If that me liſt, er it were dayes three,
So wel ye mighten bere you unto me.
  But for ye ſpeken of ſwiche gentilleſſe
As is deſcended out of old richeſſe,
That therfore ſhullen ye be gentilmen;
Swiche arrogance n'is not worth an hen.
  Loke who that is moſt vertuous alway,
Prive and apert, and moſt entendeth ay
To do the gentil dedes that he can,
And take him for the greteſt gentilman.
Criſt wol we claime of him our gentilleſſe,
Not of our elders for hir old richeſſe;
For though they yeve us all hir heritage,
For which we claime to ben of high parage,

Yet may they not bequethen for no thing
To non of us hir vertuous living,
That made hem gentilmen called to be,
And bade us folwen hem in swiche degree.
  Wel can the wise poet of Florence,
That highte Dant, speken of this sentence:
Lo in swiche maner rime is Dantes tale.
  Ful selde up riseth by his branches smale
Prowesse of man, for God of his goodnesse
Wol that we claime of him our gentillesse;
For of our elders may we nothing claime
But temporel thing, that man may hurt and maime.
  Eke every wight wot this as wel as I,
If gentillesse were planted naturelly
Unto a certain linage doun the line,
Prive and apert, than wold they never fine
To don of gentillesse the faire office;
They mighten do no vilanie or vice.
  Take fire, and bere it into the derkest hous
Betwix this and the Mount of Caucasus,
And let men shette the dores, and go thenne,
Yet wol the fire as faire lie and brenne
As twenty thousand men might it behold;
His office naturel ay wol it hold,
Up peril of my lif, til that it die.
  Here may ye see wel how that genterie

℣. 6710. *Ful selde up riseth*] Dante, *Purg.* vii. 121;
Rade volte risurge per li rami
L'humana probitate: et questo vuole
Quei che la da, perche da se si chiami.

Is not annexed to poſſeſſion,
Sith folk ne don hir operation
Alway, as doth the fire, lo, in his kind:
For God it wot men moun ful often find
A lordes ſone do ſhame and vilanie.
And he that wol han pris of his genterie,
For he was boren of a gentil hous,
And had his elders noble and vertuous,
And n'ill himſelven do no gentil dedes,
Ne folwe his gentil aunceſtrie that ded is,
He n'is not gentil, be he duk or erl,
For vilains ſinful dedes make a cherl:
For gentilleſſe n'is but the renomee
Of thin aunceſtres for hir high bountee,
Which is a ſtrange thing to thy perſone:
Thy gentilleſſe cometh fro God alone;
Than cometh our veray gentilleſſe of grace;
It was no thing bequethed us with our place.
  Thinketh how noble, as ſaith Valerius,
Was thilke Tullius Hoſtilius,
That out of poverte roſe to high nobleſſe.
Redeth Senek, and redeth eke Boece,
Ther ſhull ye ſeen expreſſe that it no dred is
That he is gentil that doth gentil dedis:

ỽ. 6741. *For gentilleſſe*] A great deal of this reaſoning is copied from *Boethius de Conſol.* l. iii. pr. 6. See alſo *R. R.* 2180, *et ſeq.*;

> For villanie maketh villeine,
> And by his dedes a chorle is ſeine, *&c.*

And therfore, leve huſbond, I thus conclude,
Al be it that min aunceſtres weren rude,
Yet may the highe God, and ſo hope I,
Granten me grace to liven vertuouſly;
Than am I gentil whan that I beginne
To liven vertuouſly and weiven ſinne.
  And ther as ye of poverte me repreve,
The highe God, on whom that we beleve,
In wilful poverte cheſe to lede his lif;
And certes every man, maiden, or wif,
May underſtond that Jeſus heven king
Ne wold not cheſe a vicious living.
  Glad poverte is an honeſt thing certain,
This wol Senek and other clerkes ſain.
Who ſo that halt him paid of his poverte
I hold him rich, al had he not a ſherte.
He that coveiteth is a poure wight,
For he wold han that is not in his might;
But he that nought hath, ne coveiteth to have,
Is riche, although ye hold him but a knave.
Veray poverte is ſinne proprely.
  Juvenal ſaith of poverte merily,
The poure man whan he goth by the way,
Beforn the theves he may ſing and play.
Poverte is hateful good; and, as I geſſe,
A ful gret bringer out of beſineſſe;

v. 6777. *Poverte is hateful good*] In this commendation of poverty our Author ſeems plainly to have had in view the following paſſage of a fabulous conference between the Emperour Adrian and Secundus the philoſopher, reported by Vin-

A gret amender eke of fapience
To him that taketh it in patience.
Poverte is this, although it feme elenge,
Poffeffion that no wight wol challenge.
Poverte ful often, whan a man is low,
Maketh his God and eke himfelf to know.
Poverte a fpectakel is, as thinketh me,
Thurgh which he may his veray frendes fee.
And therfore, Sire, fin that I you not greve,
Of my poverte no more me repreve.
  Now, Sire, of elde that ye repreven me:
And certes, Sire, though non auctoritee
Were in no book, ye gentiles of honour
Sain that men fhuld an olde wight honour,
And clepe him Fader, for your gentilleffe;
And auctours fhal I finden, as I geffe.
  Now ther ye fain that I am foule and old,
Than drede ye not to ben a cokewold;

cent of Beauvais, *Spec. Hiftor.* l. x. c. 71; "Quid eft Pauper-"tas? *Odibile bonum*; fanitatis mater; remotio curarum; *fa-"pientiæ repertrix*; negotium fine damno; *poffeffio abfque ca-"lumnia*; fine follicitudine felicitas." What Vincent has there publifhed appears to have been extracted from a larger collection of Gnomæ under the name of *Secundus*, which are ftill extant in Greek and Latin. See *Fabric. Bib. Gr.* l. vi. c. x, and mf. *Harl.* 399. The author of Pierce Ploughman has quoted and paraphrafed the fame paffage, fol. 75.

ỽ. 6781. *elenge*] Strange; probably from the old Fr. *efloingné*. So in *The Cuckow and Nightingale*, ver. 115;

Thy fonges ben fo *elenge* in good fay.

And in *P. P.* fol. 3, b.;

Where the cat is a kiten the court is full *elenge*.

See fol. 46, b. See alfo *Gloff.* in v. *Elenge*.

For filthe, and elde alſo, ſo mote I the,
Ben grete wardeins upon chaſtitee.
But natheles, ſin I know your delit,
I ſhal fulfill your worldly appetit.
Cheſe now (quod ſhe) on of thiſe thinges twey,
To han me foule and old til that I dey,
And be to you a trewe humble wif,
And never you diſpleſe in all my lif;
Or elles wol ye han me yonge and faire,
And take your aventure of the repaire
That ſhal be to your hous becauſe of me,
Or in ſom other place it may wel be?
Now cheſe yourſelven whether that you liketh.
This knight aviſeth him, and ſore ſiketh,
But at the laſt he ſaid in this manere:
My lady and my love, and wif ſo dere,
I put me in your wiſe governance,
Cheſeth yourſelf which may be moſt pleſance
And moſt honour to you and me alſo,
I do no force the whether of the two,
For as you liketh it ſufficeth me.
Than have I got the maiſterie, quod ſhe,
Sin I may cheſe and governe as me leſt.
Ye certes, wif, quod he, I hold it beſt.
Kiſſe me, quod ſhe, we be no lenger wrothe,
For by my trouth I wol be to you bothe,

℣. 6797. *For filthe, and elde alſo, ſo*] Though none of the mſſ. that I have ſeen authorize the inſertion of the ſecond *ſo* it ſeems abſolutely neceſſary.

This is to ſayn, ye bothe faire and good.
I pray to God that I mote ſterven wood
But I to you be al ſo good and trewe
As ever was wif ſin that the world was newe,
And but I be to-morwe as faire to ſeen
As any lady, emperice, or quene,
That is betwix the eſt and eke the weſt,
Doth with my lif and deth right as you leſt.
Caſt up the curtein, loke how that it is.
  And whan the knight ſaw veraily all this,
That ſhe ſo faire was, and ſo yonge therto,
For joye he hent hire in his armes two:
His herte bathed in a bath of bliſſe,
A thouſand time a-row he gan hire kiſſe:
And ſhe obeyed him in every thing
That mighte don him pleſance or liking.
And thus they live unto hir lives ende
In parfit joye; and Jeſu Criſt us ſende
Huſbondes meke and yonge, and freſh a-bed,
And grace to overlive hem that we wed.
And eke I pray Jeſus to ſhort hir lives
That wol not be governed by hir wives;
And old and angry nigards of diſpence
God ſend hem ſone a veray peſtilence.

THE FRERES PROLOGUE.

THIS worthy limitour, this noble Frere,
He made alway a maner louring chere
Upon the Sompnour, but for honeftee
No vilains word as yet to him fpake he;
But at the laft he faid unto the Wif,
Dame, (quod he) God yeve you right good lif,
Ye have here touched, all fo mote I the,
In fcole matere a ful gret difficultie;
Ye han faid mochel thing right wel I fay:
But, Dame, here as we riden by the way
Us nedeth not to fpeken but of game,
And let auctoritees, in Goddes name,
To preching and to fcole eke of clergie.
　But if it like unto this compagnie
I wol you of a Sompnour tell a game;
Parde ye may wel knowen by the name
That of a Sompnour may no good be faid;
I pray that non of you be evil apaid:
A Sompnour is a renner up and doun
With mandements for fornicatioun,
And is ybete at every tounes ende.
　Tho fpake our Hofte, A, Sire, ye fhuld ben hende

Ϋ. 6858. *Auctoritees*] *Auctoritas* was the ufual word for what we call a text of Scripture, mf. *Harl.* 106, 10: "Expofitio *auc-* "*toritatis*, Majus gaudium fuper uno peccatore, *Ibid.* 213 "Expofito *auctoritatis*, Stetit populus de longe," &c.

And curteis, as a man of your eſtat,
In compagnie we wiln have no debat:
Telleth your Tale, and let the Sompnour be.
Nay, quod the Sompnour, let him ſay by me
What ſo him liſt; whan it cometh to my lot
By God I ſhal him quiten every grot;
I ſhal him tellen which a gret honour
It is to be a flatering limitour,
And eke of many another maner crime,
Which nedeth not reherſen at this time,
And his office I ſhal him tell ywis.
Our Hoſte anſwered, Pees, no more of this.
And afterward he ſaid unto the Frere
Tel forth your Tale min owen maiſter dere.

THE FRERES TALE.

Whilom ther was dwelling in my contree
An archedeken, a man of high degree,
That boldely did execution
In puniſhing of fornication,
Of witchecraft, and eke of bauderie,
Of defamation, and avouterie,
Of chirche-reves, and of teſtaments,
Of contracts, and of lack of ſacraments,
Of uſure, and of ſimonie alſo,
But certes lechours did he greteſt wo;

The Freres Tale] A Sompnour and the devil meeting on the way, after conference become ſworn brethren, and to hell they go together. A covert invective againſt the bribery and corruption of the ſpiritual courts in thoſe days. *Urry.*

They ſhulden ſingen if that they were hent,
And ſmale titheres weren foule yſhent;
If any perſone wold upon hem plaine
Ther might aſtert hem no pecunial peine.
For ſmale tithes and ſmale offering
He made the peple pitouſly to ſing,
For er the biſhop hent hem with his crook
They weren in the archedekens book;
Than had he thurgh his juriſdiction
Power to don on hem correction.
He had a Sompnour redy to his hond,
A ſlier boy was non in Englelond;
For ſubtilly he had his eſpiaille,
That taught him wel wher it might ought availle.
He coude ſpare of lechours on or two
To techen hem to foure-and-twenty mo:
For though this Sompnour wood be as an hare,
To tell his harlotrie I wol not ſpare,
For we ben out of hir correction,
They han of us no juriſdiction,
Ne never ſhul have, terme of all hir lives.
Peter, ſo ben the women of the ſtives,
Quod this Sompnour, yput out of our cure?
Pees, with miſchance and with miſaventure,
Our Hoſte ſaid, and let him tell his Tale.
Now telleth forth, and let the Sompnour gale,
Ne ſpaireth not, min owen maiſter dere.
This falſe theef, this Sompnour, quod the Frere,

Had alway baudes redy to his hond,
As any hauke to lure in Englelond,
That told him all the ſecree that they knewe,
For hir acquaintance was not come of newe;
They weren his approvers prively:
He tooke himſelf a gret profit therby,
His maiſter knew not alway what he wan.
Withouten mandement a lewed man
He coude ſompne up peine of Criſtes curſe,
And they were inly glad to fille his purſe,
And maken him gret feſtes at the nale.
And right as Judas hadde purſes ſmale,
And was a theef, right ſwiche a theef was he;
His maſter hadde but half his duetee.
He was (if I ſhal yeven him his laud)
A theef, and eke a Sompnour, and a baud.
  He had eke wenches at his retenue,
That whether that Sire Robert or Sire Hue,
Or Jakke or Rauf, or who ſo that it were
That lay by hem, they told it in his ere.
Thus was the wenche and he of on aſſent;
And he wold fecche a feined mandement,
And ſompne hem to the chapitre bothe two,
And pill the man and let the wenche go:
Than wold he ſay, Frend, I ſhal for thy ſake
Do ſtrike thee out of oure lettres blake;

V. 6931. *the nale*] The alehouſe, P. P. fol. 32, b.;
And than fallen ſome and ſonge at *the nale*.
Skinner ſuppoſes it to be a corruption of *inn-ale*, which is not impoſſible. See *Gloſſ.* in v. *Nale*.

Thee thar no more as in this cas travaille;
I am thy frend ther I may thee availle.
Certain he knew of briboures many mo
Than possible is to tell in yeres two;
For in this world n'is dogge for the bowe
That can an hurt dere from an hole yknowe
Bet than this Sompnour knew a slie lechour,
Or an avoutrer or a paramour;
And for that was the fruit of all his rent,
Therfore on it he set all his entent.
And so befell that ones on a day
This Sompnour, waiting ever on his pray,
Rode forth to sompne a widewe, an olde ribibe,
Feining a cause, for he wold han a bribe;
And happed that he saw beforn him ride
A gay yeman under a forest side;
A bow he bare, and arwes bright and kene,
He had upon a courtepy of grene,
An hat upon his hed with frenges blake.
Sire, quod the Sompnour, haile, and wel atake.

ỳ. 6959. *an olde ribibe*] He calls her below, ver. 7155, *an olde rebekke*. They were both names for the same musical instrument. See *Menage*, in v. *Rebec*. *Ribeba*, in *The Decameron*, ix. 5, is rendered by Macon, the old French translator, *rebec* and *guiterne*. Chaucer uses also the diminutive *ribible*, ver. 3331, 4395. How this instrument came to be put for an old woman I cannot guess, unless perhaps from its shrillness. An old writer, quoted by *Du Cange*, in v. *Baudosa*, has the following lines in his description of a concert;

Quidam *rebeccam* arcuabant
Muliebrem vocem confingentes.

Welcome, quod he, and every good felaw.
Whider ridest thou under this grene shaw?
(Saide this yeman) wolt thou fer to-day?
This Sompnour him answerd, and saide Nay.
Here faste by (quod he) is min entent
To riden, for to reisen up a rent
That longeth to my lordes duetee.
A! art thou than a baillif? Ye, quod he.
(He dorste not for veray filth and shame
Say that he was a Sompnour for the name.)
De par dieux, quod this yeman, leve brother,
Thou art a baillif, and I am another.
I am unknowen as in this contree;
Of thin acquaintance I wol prayen thee,
And eke of brotherhed, if that thee list.
I have gold and silver lying in my chist;
If that thee hap to come in to our shire
Al shal be thin, right as thou wolt desire.
Grand mercy, quod this Sompnour, by my faith.
Everich in others hond his trouthe laith
For to be sworne brethren til they dey.
In daliaunce they riden forth and pley.
This Sompnour, which that was as ful of jangles
As ful of venime ben thise wariangles,

ṽ. 6990. *wariangles*] I have nothing to say either in refutation or support of Mr. Speght's explanation of this word—"A kind of birds full of noise, and very ravenous, preying upon others, which when they have taken they use to hang upon a thorne or pricke, and teare them in peeces, and de-

And ever enquering upon every thing,
Brother, quod he, wher is now your dwelling,
Another day if that I ſhuld you ſeche?
  This yeman him anſwerd in ſofte ſpeche,
Brother, quod he, fer in the north contree,
Wheras I hope ſomtime I ſhal thee ſee.
Or we depart I ſhal thee ſo wel wiſſe,
That of min hous ne ſhalt thou never miſſe.
  Now brother, quod this Sompnour, I you pray
Teche me, while that we riden by the way,
(Sith that ye ben a baillif as am I)
Som ſubtiltee, and tell me faithfully
In min office how I may moſt winne;
And ſpareth not for conſcience or for ſinne,
But as my brother tell me how do ye.
  Now by my trouthe, brother min, ſaid he,
As I ſhal tellen thee a faithful Tale.
My wages ben ful ſtreit and eke ful ſmale;
My lord is hard to me and dangerous,
And min office is ful laborious,
And therfore by extortion I leve;
Forſoth I take all that men wol me yeve:
Algates by ſleighte or by violence
Fro yere to yere I win all my diſpence:

"vour them; and the common opinion is that the thorne "whereupon they thus faſten them and eat them is afterward "poiſonſome. In Staffordſhire and Shropſhire the name is com-"mon"—except that Cotgrave, in his *Fr. Dict.* explains *ar-neat* to ſignify the ravenous bird called a *ſhrike, nynmurder, wariangle.* See *Gloſſ.* in v. *Wariangles.*

I can no better tellen faithfully.
Now certes (quod this Sompnour) ſo fare I;
I ſpare not to taken, God it wote,
But if it be to hevy or to hote.
What I may gete in conſeil prively
No maner conſcience of that have I.
N'ere min extortion I might not liven,
Ne of ſwiche japes wol I not be ſhriven.
Stomak ne conſcience know I non;
I ſhrew thiſe ſhrifte faders everich on:
Wel be we met by God and by Seint Jame.
But, leve brother, tell me than thy name,
Quod this Sompnour. Right in this mene while
This yeman gan a litel for to ſmile.
Brother, quod he, wolt thou that I thee tell?
I am a fend, my dwelling is in hell,
And here I ride about my pourchaſing
To wote wher men wol give me any thing:
My pourchas is th' effect of all my rent,
Loke how thou rideſt for the ſame entent:
To winnen good thou rekkeſt never how:
Right ſo fare I, for riden wol I now
Unto the worldes ende for a praye.
A, quod this Sompnour, *benedicite!* what ſay ye?
I wend ye were a yeman trewely,
Ye have a mannes ſhape as wel as I:

v. 7018. *to hevy or to hote*] We have nearly the ſame expreſſion in *Froiſſart*, v. i. c. 229; "ne laiſſoient riens à prendre, "s'il n'eſtoit *trop chaud*, trop froid, ou *trop peſant*."

Have ye than a figure determinat
In helle, ther ye ben in your eſtat?
Nay certainly, quod he, ther have we non,
But whan us liketh we can take us on,
Or elles make you wene that we ben ſhape
Somtime like a man, or like an ape,
Or like an angel can I ride or go;
It is no wonder thing though it be ſo;
A louſy jogelour can deceiven thee,
And parde yet can I more craft than he.
Why, quod the Sompnour, ride ye than or gon
In ſondry ſhape, and not alway in on?
For we, quod he, wol us ſwiche forme make
As moſt is able our preye for to take.
What maketh you to han al this labour?
Ful many a cauſe, leve Sire Sompnour,
Saide this fend. But alle thing hath time;
The day is ſhort, and it is paſſed prime,
And yet ne wan I nothing in this day;
I wol entend to winning if I may,
And not entend our thinges to declare;
For, brother min, thy wit is al to bare
To underſtand, although I told hem thee.
But for thou axeſt why labouren we?
For ſomtime we be Goddes inſtruments,
And menes to don his commandements,
Whan that him liſt, upon his creatures,
In divers actes and in divers figures:

Withouten him we have no might certain,
If that him liſt to ſtonden theragain.
And ſom time at our praiere han we leve
Only the body and not the ſoule to greve;
Witneſſe on Job, whom that we diden wo,
And ſomtime han we might on bothe two,
This is to ſain, on ſoule and body eke:
And ſomtime be we ſuffered for to ſeke
Upon a man, and don his ſoule unreſte
And not his body, and all is for the beſte.
Whan he withſtandeth our temptation
It is a cauſe of his ſalvation,
Al be it that it was not our entente
He ſhuld be ſauf, but that we wold him hente.
And ſomtime be we ſervants unto man,
As to the Archebiſhop Seint Dunſtan,
And to the apoſtle ſervant eke was I.
Yet tell me, quod this Sompnour, faithfully,
Make ye you newe bodies thus alway
Of elements? The fend anſwered Nay.
Somtime we feine, and ſomtime we ariſe
With ded bodies, in ful ſondry wiſe,
And ſpeke as renably, and faire, and wel,
As to the Phitoneſſe did Samuel;

ỳ. 7092. *As to the Phitoneſſe did Samuel*] So mſ. *A.*; the editt. read,

As the Phitoneſſe did to Samuel—

which is certainly wrong. See 1 *Sam.* xxviii. Our Author uſes *Phitoneſſe* for *Pythoneſſe*, *H. F.* iii. 171; and ſo does Gower, *Conf. Amant.* fol. 140;

The *Phitoneſſe* in Samary.—

And yet wol ſom men ſay it was not he:
I do no force of your divinitee.
But o thing warne I thee, I wol not jape,
Thou wolt algates wete how we be ſhape:
Thou ſhalt hereafterward, my brother dere,
Come wher thee nedeth not of me to lere,
For thou ſhalt by thin owen experience
Conne in a chaiere rede of this ſentence
Bet than Virgile, while he was on live,
Or Dant alſo. Now let us riden blive,
For I wol holden compagnie with thee
Til it be ſo that thou forſake me.
 Nay, quod this Sompnour, that ſhal never betide.
I am yeman knowen is ful wide;
My trouthe wol I hold, as in this cas;
For though thou were the devil Sathanas
My trouthe wol I hold to thee, my brother,
As I have ſworne, and eche of us to other,
For to be trewe brethren in this cas,
And bothe we gon abouten our pourchas.
Take thou thy part, what that men wol thee yeve,
And I ſhal min, thus may we bothe leve;
And if that any of us have more than other
Let him be trewe, and part it with his brother.
 I graunte, quod the devil, by my fay.
And with that word they riden forth hir way,
And right at entring of the tounes ende
To which this Sompnour ſhope him for to wende

They ſaw a cart that charged was with hay,
Which that a carter drove forth on his way.
Depe was the way, for which the carte ſtood;
The carter ſmote, and cried as he were wood,
Heit Scot, heit Brok; what, ſpare ye for the ſtones?
The fend (quod he) you fecche body and bones,
As ferforthly as ever ye were foled,
So mochel wo as I have with you tholed.
The devil have al, bothe hors, and cart, and hay.
  The Sompnour ſayde, Here ſhal we have a pray;
And nere the fend he drow, as nought ne were,
Ful prively, and rouned in his ere,
Herken my brother, herken, by thy faith;
Hereſt thou not how that the carter ſaith?
Hent it anon, for he hath yeve it thee,
Both hay and cart, and eke his caples three.
  Nay, quod the devil, God wot never a del;
It is not his entente, truſt thou me wel:
Axe him thyſelf, if thou not troweſt me,
Or elles ſtint a while and thou ſhalt ſee.
  This carter thakketh his hors upon the croupe,
And they begonne to drawen and to ſtoupe.
Heit now, quod he; ther, Jeſu Criſt you bleſſe,
And all his hondes werk bothe more and leſſe!
That was wel twight, min owen Liard boy,
I pray God ſave thy body and Seint Eloy.

℣. 7145. *Liard*] A common appellative for a horſe, from its grey colour, as *Bayard* was from *bay*. [See before, ver. 4113.] *P. P.* fol. 92;

He lyght downe of *Liarde* and ladde him in his hand.

Now is my cart out of the ſlough parde.
  Lo, brother, quod the fend, what told I thee?
Here may ye ſeen, min owen dere brother,
The cherl ſpake o thing but he thought another.
Let us go forth abouten our viage;
Here win I nothing upon this cariage.
  Whan that they comen somwhat out of toun
This Sompnour to his brother gan to roune;
Brother, quod he, here woneth an old rebekke
That had almoſt as leſe to leſe hire nekke
As for to yeve a peny of hire good.
I wol have twelf pens though that ſhe be wood,
Or I wol ſomone hire to our office,
And yet, God wot, of hire know I no vice;
But for thou canſt not as in this contree
Winnen thy coſt, take here enſample of me.
  This Sompnour clappeth at the widewes gate;
Come out, he ſayd, thou olde very trate;
I trow thou haſt ſom frere or preeſt with thee.
  Who clappeth? ſaid this wif, *benedicite!*
God ſave you, Sire, what is your ſwete will?
  I have, quod he, of ſomons here a bill:
Up peine of curſing loke that thou be
To-morwe before the archedekenes knee,

Biſhop Douglas, in his Virgil, uſually puts *liart* for *albus*, *incanus*, &c.

℣. 7164. *thou olde very trate*] So mſſ. *C.* 1, *Aſk.* 1, 2, and ed. *Ca.* 2. The later editt. read *viritrate*, in one word. We may ſuppoſe *trate* to be uſed for *trot*, a common term for an old woman. Keyſler [*Antiq. Sept.* p. 503,] refers it to the ſame original with the German *drud* or *drut*, *ſaga*.

To anſwere to the court of certain thinges.
  Now Lord, quod ſhe, Criſt Jeſu, King of kinges,
So wiſly helpe me as I ne may:
I have ben ſike, and that ful many a day:
I may not go ſo fer (quod ſhe) ne ride
But I be ded, ſo priketh it in my ſide.
May I not axe a libel, Sire Sompnour,
And anſwere ther by my procuratour
To ſwiche thing as men wold appoſen me?
  Yes, quod this Sompnour, pay anon, let ſee,
Twelf pens to me, and I wol thee acquite:
I ſhal no profit han therby but lite;
My maiſter hath the profit and not I.
Come of, and let me riden haſtily;
Yeve me twelf pens, I may no lenger tarie.
  Twelf pens! quod ſhe; now Lady Seint Marie
So wiſly helpe me out of care and ſinne,
This wide world though that I ſhuld it winne,
Ne have I not twelf pens within my hold.
Ye knowen wel that I am poure and old;
Kithe your almeſſe upon me poure wretche.
  Nay than, quod he, the foule fend me fetche
If I thee excuſe, though thou ſhuldeſt be ſpilt.
  Alas! quod ſhe, God wot I have no gilt.
  Pay me, quod he, or by the ſwete Seinte Anne
As I wol bere away thy newe panne
For dette which thou oweſt me of old
Whan that thou madeſt thyn huſbond cokewold

I paied at home for thy correction.
Thou lieſt, quod ſhe, by my ſalvation;
Ne was I never or now, widew ne wif,
Sompned unto your court in all my lif,
Ne never I n'as but of my body trewe.
Unto the devil rough and blake of hewe
Yeve I thy body and my panne alſo.
And whan the devil herd hire curſen ſo
Upon hire knees, he ſayd in this manere;
Now Mabily, min moder dere,
Is this your will in erneſt that ye ſey?
The devil, quod ſhe, ſo fetche him or he dey,
And panne and all, but he wol him repent.
Nay, olde ſtot, that is not min entent,
Quod this Sompnour, for to repenten me
For any thing that I have had of thee:
I wold I had thy ſmok and every cloth.
Now brother, quod the devil, be not wroth;
Thy body and this panne ben min by right:
Thou ſhalt with me to helle yet to-night,
Wher thou ſhalt knowen of our privetee
More than a maiſter of divinitee.
And with that word the foule fend him hent
Body and ſoule: he with the devil went
Wher as thiſe Sompnours han hir heritage:
And God, that maked after his image
Mankinde, ſave and gide us all and ſome,
And lene this Sompnour good man to become.

Lordings, I coude have told you (quod this Frere)
Had I had leiſer for this Sompnour here,
After the text of Criſt, and Poule, and John,
And of oure other doctours many on,
Swiche peines that your hertes might agriſe,
Al be it ſo that no tonge may deviſe,
Though that I might a thouſand winter tell,
The peines of thilke curſed hous of hell:
But for to kepe us fro that curſed place
Waketh and prayeth Jeſu of his grace
So kepe us fro the temptour Sathanas.
Herkneth this word, beware as in this cas;
The leon ſit in his awaite alway
To ſle the innocent if that he may.
Diſpoſeth ay your hertes to withſtond
The fend, that you wold maken thral and bond;
He may not tempten you over your might,
For Criſt wol be your champion and your knight;
And prayeth that this Sompnour him repent
Of his miſdedes or that the fend him hent.

THE SOMPNOURES PROLOGUE.

This Sompnour in his ſtirops high he ſtood;
Upon this Frere his herte was ſo wood,
That like an aſpen leef he quoke for ire.
Lordings, quod he, but o thing I deſire;
I you beſeche that of your curteſie,
Sin ye han herd this falſe Frere lie,

As ſuffereth me I may my Tale telle.
  This Frere boſteth that he knoweth helle,
And God it wot that is but litel wonder;
Freres and fendes ben but litel aſonder.
  For parde ye han often time herd telle
How that a frere raviſhed was to helle
In ſpirit ones by a viſioun,
And as an angel lad him up and doun,
To ſhewen him the peines that ther were,
In all the place ſaw he not a frere;
Of other folk he ſaw ynow in wo.
  Unto this angel ſpake the frere tho;
Now Sire, quod he, han freres ſwiche a grace
That non of hem ſhal comen in this place?
  Yes, quod this angel, many a millioun;
And unto Sathanas he lad him doun.
(And now hath Sathanas, ſaith he, a tayl
Broder than of a carrike is the ſayl)
Hold up thy tayl, thou Sathanas, quod he,
Shew forth thin ers, and let the frere ſee
Wher is the neſt of freres in this place.
And er than half a furlong way of ſpace,
Right ſo as bees out ſwarmen of an hive,
Out of the devils ers ther gonnen drive
A twenty thouſand freres on a route,
And thurghout hell they ſwarmed al aboute,

ỽ. 7269. *(And now hath Sathanas, ſaith he*] So mſſ. C. 1, *Aſk.* 1, 2. I have put theſe two lines in a parentheſis, as *he* refers to the narrator, the Sompnour.

ỽ. 7277. *A twenty thouſand*] I have added *A* for the ſake of

And com agen, as faſt as they may gon,
And in his ers they crepen everich on:
He clapt his tayl agen, and lay ful ſtill.
  This frere, whan he loked had his fill
Upon the turments of this ſory place,
His ſpirit God reſtored of his grace
Into his body agen, and he awoke;
But natheles for fere yet he quoke,
So was the devils ers ay in his mind,
That is his heritage of veray kind.
  God ſave you alle ſave this curſed Frere;
My Prologue wol I end in this manere.

THE SOMPNOURES TALE.

Lordings, there is in Yorkſhire, as I geſſe,
A merſh contree ycalled Holderneſſe,
In which ther went a limitour aboute,
To preche and eke to beg it is no doute.
And ſo befell that on a day this frere
Had preched at a chirche in his manere,
And ſpecially aboven every thing
Excited he the peple in his preching

the verſe. Chaucer frequently prefixes it to nouns of number. See ver. 10697;

And up they riſen, wel *a* ten or twelve.

The Sompnoures Tale] A begging friar coming to a farmer's houſe who lay ſick, obtaineth of the ſick man a certain legacy which muſt be equally divided among his convent. A requital to the friar, ſhewing their cozenage, loitering, impudent begging, and hypocritical praying.

To trentals, and to yeve, for Goddes ſake,
Wherwith men mighten holy houſes make,
Ther as divine ſervice is honoured,
Not ther as it is waſted and devoured,
Ne ther it nedeth not for to be yeven,
As to poſſeſſioners, that mowen leven
(Thanked be God) in wele and abundance.
Trentals, ſayd he, deliveren fro penance
Hir frendes ſoules as wel olde as yonge,
Ye, whan that they ben haſtily yſonge,
Not for to hold a preeſt jolif and gay,
He ſingeth not but o maſſe on a day.
Delivereth out (quod he) anon the ſoules.
Ful hard it is with fleſhhook or with oules
To ben yclawed, or to bren or bake.
Now ſpede you haſtily for Criſtes ſake.
  And whan this frere had ſaid all his entent,
With *qui cum patri* forth his way he went.
Whan folk in chirche had yeve him what hem left
He went his way, no lenger wold he reſt.
With ſcrippe and tipped ſtaf, ytucked hie,
In every hous he gan to pore and prie,
And begged mele and cheſe, or elles corn.
His felaw had a ſtaf tipped with horn,
A pair of tables all of ivory,
And a pointel ypoliſhed fetiſly,

℣. 7299. *To trentals*] *Un trentel*, Fr. was a ſervice of thirty maſſes, which were uſually celebrated upon as many different days, for the dead. *Du Cange*, in v. *Trentale*.

And wrote alway the names, as he ſtood,
Of alle folk that yave hem any good,
Aſkaunce that he wolde for hem preye.
Yeve us a buſhel whete, or malt or reye,
A Goddes kichel, or a trippe of cheſe,
Or elles what you liſt, we may not cheſe;

ỽ. 7327. *Aſkaunce that he wolde for hem preye*] The Gloſſary interprets *aſkaunce* to mean aſkew, aſide, ſideways, in a ſide view, upon what authority I know not. It will be better to examine the other paſſages in which the ſame word occurs before we determine the ſenſe of it. See ver. 16306;

Aſcaunce that craft is ſo light to lere.

Tro. i. 285;

Aſcaunce, lo! is this not wiſely ſpoken?

Ibid. 292;

Aſcaunce, what! may I not ſtonden here?

Lydg. Trag. fol. 136, b.;

Aſcaunce I am of maners moſt chaungeable.

In the firſt and laſt inſtance, as well as in the text, *aſkaunce* ſeems to ſignify ſimply *as if, quaſi;* in the two others it ſignifies a little more, *as if to ſay*. This latter ſignification may be clearly eſtabliſhed from the third line, which in the Italian original [*Philoſtrato di Boccaccio*, l. i,] ſtands thus;

Quaſi diceſſe, e no ci ſi puo ſtare?

So that *aſcaunce* is there equivalent to *quaſi diceſſe* in Italian.—As to the etymology of this word, I muſt confeſs myſelf more at a loſs. I obſerve however that one of a ſimilar form, in the Teut. has a ſimilar ſignification. *Als-kacks, quaſi, quaſi vero*, Kilian. Our *as* is the ſame with *als*, Teut. and Sax.; it is only a further corruption of *al ſo*. Perhaps therefore *aſcaunce* may have been originally *als-kanſſe*. *Kanſſe*, in Teut. is *chance*, Fr. and Eng.—I will juſt add that this very rare phraſe was alſo uſed, as I ſuſpect, by the author of The Continuation of The Canterbury Tales, firſt printed by Mr. Urry. *Prol.* ver. 361;

And al *aſcaunce* ſhe loved him wel, ſhe toke him by the ſwere.

It is printed *a ſtaunce*.

ỽ. 7329. *A Goddes kichel*] "It was called *A Goddes kichel*,

A Goddes halfpeny, or a maſſe peny,
Or yeve us of your braun, if ye have any,
A dagon of your blanket, leve Dame,
Our ſuſter dere, (lo, here I write your name)
Bacon or beef, or ſwiche thing as ye find.
  A ſturdy harlot went hem ay behind,
That was her hoſtes man, and bare a ſakke,
And what men yave hem laid it on his bakke.
And whan that he was out at dore, anon
He planed away the names everich on
That he before had written in his tables:
He ſerved hem with nifles and with fables.
  Nay, ther thou lieſt, thou Sompnour, quod the Frere.
Pees, quod our Hoſte, for Criſtes moder dere
Tell forth thy Tale, and ſpare it not at all.
  So thrive I, quod this Sompnour, ſo I ſhall.
  So long he went fro hous to hous, til he
Came to an hous ther he was wont to be
Refreſhed more than in a hundred places.
Sike lay the huſbond man whos that the place is;

"becauſe godfathers and godmothers uſed commonly to give "one of them to their godchildren when they aſked bleſ-"ſing," *Sp.* And ſo we are to ſuppoſe *a Goddes halfpeny*, in ver. 7331, was called for the ſame reaſon, *&c.* But this is all *gratis dictum* I believe. The phraſe is French, and the true meaning of it is explained by M. de la Monnoye in a note upon the *Contes de B.D. Periers*, t. ii. p. 107, *Belle ſerrure de Dieu*; "Ex-"preſſion du petit peuple, qui raporte pieuſement tout à Dieu. "—Rien n'eſt plus commun dans la bouche des bonnes vieilles, "que ces eſpeces d'Hebraïſmes: Il m'en coute un bel ecu de "Dieu; Il ne me reſte que ce pauvre enfant de Dieu; Donez "moi une benite aumône de Dieu."

Bedred upon a couche low he lay.
Deus hic, quod he; O Thomas! frend, good day,
Sayde this frere all curtiſly and ſoft.
Thomas, quod he, God yelde it you, ful oft
Have I upon this benche faren ful wele,
Here have I eten many a mery mele.
And fro the benche he drove away the cat,
And laied adoun his potent and his hat,
And eke his ſcrip, and ſet himſelf adoun:
His felaw was ywalked into toun,
Forth with with his knave, into that hoſtelrie
Wher as he ſhope him thilke night to lie.
O dere maiſter! quod this ſike man,
How have ye faren ſin that March began?
I ſaw you not this fourtene night and more.
God wot, quod he, laboured have I ful ſore,
And ſpecially for thy ſalvation
Have I ſayd many a precious oriſon,
And for our other frendes God hem bleſſe.
I have this day ben at your chirche at meſſe,
And ſaid a ſermon to my ſimple wit,
Not all after the text of holy writ,
For it is hard to you as I ſuppoſe,
And therefore wol I teche you ay the gloſe.
Gloſing is a ful glorious thing certain,
For letter ſleth, ſo as we clerkes ſain;
Ther have I taught hem to be charitable,
And ſpend hir good ther it is reaſonable;

And ther I ſaw our dame; a! wher is ſhe?
  Yonder, I trow that in the yard ſhe be,
Sayde this man, and ſhe wol come anon.
  Ey maiſter, welcome be ye by Seint John,
Sayde this wif; how fare ye hertily?
  This frere ariſeth up ful curtiſly,
And hire embraceth in his armes narwe,
And kiſſeth hire ſwete, and chirketh as a ſparwe
With his lippes. Dame, quod he, right wel,
As he that is your ſervant every del.
Thanked be God that you yaf ſoule and lif
Yet ſaw I not this day ſo faire a wif
In all the chirche, God ſo ſave me.
  Ye God amende defautes, Sire, quod ſhe,
Algates welcome be ye, by my fay.
  Grand mercy, Dame, that have I found alway.
But of your grete goodneſſe, by your leve,
I wolde pray you that ye not you greve
I wol with Thomas ſpeke a litel throw,
Thiſe curates ben ſo negligent and ſlow
To gropen tendrely a conſcience.
In ſhrift, in preching, is my diligence
And ſtudy, in Peters wordes and in Poules;
I walke and fiſhe Criſten mennes ſoules,
To yeld our Lord Jeſu his propre rent;
To ſprede his word is ſette all min entent.
  Now by your faith, o dere Sire! quod ſhe,
Chideth him wel for Seinte Charitee:

He is ay angry as is a piſſemire
Though that he have all that he can deſire;
Though I him wrie a-night, and make him warm,
And over him lay my leg and eke min arm,
He groneth as our bore lith in our ſtie:
Other diſport of him right non have I;
I may not pleſe him in no maner cas.
O Thomas, *jeo vous die*, Thomas, Thomas!
This maketh the fend, this muſte ben amended.
Ire is a thing that high God hath defended,
And therof wol I ſpeke a word or two.
Now maiſter, quod the wif, er that I go,
What wol ye dine? I wol go theraboute.
Now Dame, quod he, *jeo vous die ſanz doute*,
Have I not of a capon but the liver,
And of your white bred nat but a ſhiver,
And after that a roſted pigges hed,
(But I ne wolde for me no beeſt were ded)
Than had I with you homly ſuffiſance;
I am a man of little ſuſtenance:
My ſpirit hath his foſtring in the Bible:
My body is ay ſo ready and ſo penible
To waken that my ſtomak is deſtroied.
I pray you, Dame, that ye be nought annoied
Though I ſo frendly you my conſeil ſhewe;
By God I n'old have told it but a fewe.
Now Sire, quod ſhe, but o word er I go.
My child is ded within thiſe wekes two,

Sone after that ye went out of this toun.
His deth ſaw I by revelatioun,
Sayde this frere, at home in our dortour.'
I dare wel ſain that er than half an hour
After his deth I ſaw him borne to bliſſe
In min aviſion, ſo God me wiſſe;
So did our ſextein and our fermerere,
That han ben trewe freres fifty yere;
They may now, God be thanked of his lone,
Maken hir jubilee, and walke alone.
And up I aroſe, and all our covent eke,
With many a tere trilling on our cheke,
Withouten noiſe or clatering of belles,
Te deum was our ſong, and nothing elles,
Save that to Criſt I bade an oriſon,
Thanking him of my revelation.
For, Sire and Dame, truſteth me right wel
Our oriſons ben more effectuel,
And more we ſeen of Criſtes ſecree thinges,
Than borel folk, although that they be kinges.
We live in poverte and in abſtinence,
And borel folk in richeſſe and diſpence
Of mete and drinke, and in hir foule delit:
We han this worldes luſt all in deſpit.

℣. 7442. *fifty yere*] See *Du Cange*, in v. *Sempectæ*. Peculiar honours and immunities were granted by the rule of St. Benedict to thoſe monks "qui quinquaginta annos in ordine exegerant, quos annum jubilæum exegiſſe vulgo dicimus." It is probable that ſome ſimilar regulation obtained in the other orders.

Lazar and Dives lividen diverſely,
And divers guerdon hadden they therby.
Who ſo wol pray he muſt faſt and be clene,
And fat his ſoule and make his body lene.
We fare as ſayth the apoſtle; cloth and food
Sufficeth us though they be not ful good.
The clenenefſe and the faſting of us freres
Maketh that Criſt accepteth our praieres.
  Lo, Moiſes forty daies and forty night
Faſted er that the high God ful of might
Spake with him in the mountagne of Sinay:
With empty wombe of faſting many a day
Received he the lawe that was writen
With Goddes finger: and Eli, wel ye witen,
In Mount Oreb, er he had any ſpeche
With highe God, that is our lives leche,
He faſted long, and was in contemplance.
  Aaron, that had the temple in governance,
And eke the other preeſtes everich on,
Into the temple whan they ſhulden gon
To praien for the peple, and do ſerviſe,
They n'olden drinken in no maner wiſe
No drinke which that might hem dronken make,
But ther in abſtinence pray and wake
Leſt that they deiden. Take heed what I ſay—
But they be ſobre that for the peple pray—
Ware that I ſay—No more; for it ſufficeth.
Our Lord Jeſu, as holy writ deviſeth,

Yave us enſample of faſting and praieres;
Therfore we mendiants, we ſely freres,
Ben wedded to poverte and continence,
To charitee, humbleſſe, and abſtinence,
To perſecution for rightwiſneſſe,
To weping, miſericorde, and to cleneneſſe;
And therfore may ye ſee that our praieres
(I ſpeke of us, we mendiants, we freres)
Ben to the highe God more acceptable
Than youres, with your feſtes at your table.
  Fro Paradis firſt, if I ſhal not lie,
Was man out chaſed for his glotonie;
And chaſt was man in Paradis certain.
But herken now, Thomas, what I ſhal ſain:
I have no text of it as I ſuppoſe,
But I ſhal find it in a maner gloſe;
That ſpecially our ſwete Lord Jeſus
Spake this by freres whan he ſayde thus,
Bleſſed be they that poure in ſpirit ben;
And ſo forth all the goſepl may ye ſen
Whether it be liker our profeſſion
Or hirs that ſwimmen in poſſeſſion.
Fie on hir pompe, and on hir glotonie,
And on hir lewedneſſe! I hem defie.

ỽ. 7488. *mendiants*] In mſ. *A.* it is *mendinants*, both here and below, ver. 7494, which reading, though not agreeable to analogy, is perhaps the true one, as I find the word conſtantly ſo ſpelled in the ſtat. 12 R. II. c. 7, 8, 9, 10.

Me thinketh they ben like Jovinian,
Fat as a whale, and walken as a fwan;
Al vinolent as botel in the fpence;
Hir praier is of ful gret reverence:
Whan they for foules fay the Pfalm of Davit,
Lo, buf they fay, *Cor meum eructavit.*
  Who foloweth Criftes gofpel and his lore
But we, that humble ben, and chaft and pore,
Workers of Goddes word, not auditours?
Therfore right as an hauke upon a fours
Up fpringeth into the aire, right fo praieres
Of charitable and chaft befy freres
Maken hir fours to Goddes eres two.
Thomas, Thomas! fo mote I ride or go,
And by that lord that cleped is Seint Ive,
N'ere thou our broder fhuldeft thou not thrive.
In our chapitre pray we day and night
To Crift that he thee fende hele and might

ỽ. 7511. *Jovinian*] Againft whom St. Jerome wrote, or perhaps the fuppofed emperour of that name in the *Gefta Romanorum*, c. lix, whofe ftory was worked up into a morality, under the title of *L'orgueil et préfomption de l'Empereur Jovinian---à 19 perfonages.* It was printed at Lions 1581. 8vo, *fur une vieille copie. Du Verdier*, in v. *Jovinien.* —— The fame ftory is told of a Robert King of Sicily, in an old Englifh poem, mf. *Harl.* 1701. Mr. Warton has given large extracts from an Oxford mf. as I fuppofe, of the fame poem, *Hift. of Eng. Po.* p. 184.

ỽ. 7514. *of ful gret reverence*] The editt. have changed this to *ful litel*; but the reading of the mff. may ftand, if it be underftood ironically.

Thy body for to welden haſtily.
  God wot, quod he, nothing therof fele I.
As help me Criſt, as I in fewe yeres
Have ſpended upon divers maner freres
Ful many a pound, yet fare I never the bet;
Certain my good have I almoſt beſet:
Farewel my good, for it is al ago.
  The frere anſwered, O Thomas! doſt thou ſo?
What nedeth you diverſe freres to ſeche?
What nedeth him that hath a parfit leche
To fechen other leches in the toun?
Your inconſtance is your confuſion.
Hold ye than me, or elles our covent,
To pray for you ben inſufficient?
Thomas, that jape n'is not worth a mite;
Your maladie is for we han to lite.
A! yeve that covent half a quarter otes,
And yeve that covent four-and-twenty grotes,
And yeve that frere a peny and let him go:
Nay, nay, Thomas, it may no thing be ſo.
What is a ferthing worth parted on twelve?
Lo, eche thing that is oned in himſelve
Is more ſtrong than whan it is yſcatered.
Thomas, of me thou ſhalt not ben yflatered,
Thou woldeſt han our labour al for nought.
The highe God, that all this world hath wrought,
Saith that the workman worthy is his hire.
Thomas, nought of your treſor I deſire

As for myſelf, but that all our covent
To pray for you is ay ſo diligent,
And for to bilden Criſtes owen chirche.
Thomas, if ye wol lernen for to wirche,
Of bilding up of chirches may ye finde
If it be good in Thomas lif of Inde.
  Ye liggen here ful of anger and of ire,
With which the devil ſet your herte on fire,
And chiden here this holy innocent,
Your wif, that is ſo good and patient;
And therfore trow me, Thomas, if thee leſt,
Ne ſtrive not with thy wif, as for the beſt.
And bere this word away now by thy faith,
Touching ſwiche thing, lo, what the wiſe ſaith:
  Within thy hous ne be thou no leon,
To thy ſuggets do non oppreſſion,
Ne make thou not thin acquaintance to flee.
  And yet, Thomas, eftſones charge I thee
Beware from ire that in thy boſom ſlepeth;
Ware fro the ſerpent that ſo ſlily crepeth
Under the gras, and ſtingeth ſubtilly:
Beware, my ſone, and herken patiently
That twenty thouſand men han loſt hir lives
For ſtriving with hir lemmans and hir wives.
Now ſith ye han ſo holy and meek a wif,
What nedeth you, Thomas, to maken ſtrif?
Ther n'is ywis no ſerpent ſo cruel,
Whan man tredeth on his tail, ne half ſo fel,

As woman is whan ſhe hath caught an ire;
Veray vengeance is than all hire deſire.
Ire is a ſinne on of the grete ſeven,
Abhominable unto the God of heven,
And to himſelf it is deſtruction:
This every lewed vicar and perſon
Can ſay how ire engendreth homicide:
Ire is in ſoth executour of pride.
I coud of ire ſay ſo mochel ſorwe
My Tale ſhulde laſten til to-morwe;
And therfore pray I God both day and night
An irous man God ſend him litel might.
It is gret harm, and certes gret pitee,
To ſette an irous man in high degree.
Whilom ther was an irous poteſtat,
As ſaith Senek, that during his eſtat
Upon a day out riden knightes two;
And, as Fortune wold that it were ſo,
That on of hem came home, that other nought.
Anon the knight before the juge is brought,
That ſaide thus; Thou haſt thy felaw ſlain,
For which I deme thee to the deth certain.
And to another knight commanded he,
Go, lede him to the deth, I charge thee.
And happed as they wenten by the wey
Toward the place ther as he ſhulde dey,

℣. 7600. *As ſaith Senek*] This ſtory is told by *Seneca*, *de Irâ*, l. i. c. xvi, of Cn. Piſo. It is alſo told of an emperour Eraclius, *Geſta Romanorum*, cap. cxi.

The knight came which men wenden had be ded:
Than thoughten they it was the beſte rede
To lede hem bothe to the juge again.
They ſaiden, Lord, the knight ne hath not ſlain
His felaw, here he ſtondeth hol alive.
Ye ſhull be ded, quod he, ſo mot I thrive,
That is to ſay, both on, and two, and three.
And to the firſte knight right thus ſpake he.
I damned thee, thou muſt algate be ded;
And thou alſo muſt nedes leſe thyn hed,
For thou art cauſe why thy felaw deyeth;
And to the thridde knight right thus he ſeyeth,
Thou haſt not don that I commanded thee.
And thus he did do ſlen hem alle three.
Irous Cambiſes was eke dronkelew,
And ay delighted him to ben a ſhrew:
And ſo befell a lord of his meinie,
That loved vertuous moralitee,
Sayd on a day betwix hem two right thus;
A lord is loſt if he be vicious;
And dronkenneſſe is eke a foule record
Of any man, and namely of a lord.
Ther is ful many an eye and many an ere
Awaiting on a lord, and he n'ot wher.
For Goddes love drink more attemprely:
Win maketh man to leſen wretchedly

Ver. 7625. *Irous Cambiſes*] This ſtory is alſo in *Seneca*, l. iii. c. xiv.: it differs a little from one in *Herodotus*, l. iii.

His mind, and eke his limmes everich on.
The revers ſhalt thou ſee, quod he, anon,
And preve it by thyn owen experience
That win ne doth to folk no ſwiche offence.
Ther is no win bereveth me my might
Of hond, ne foot, ne of min eyen ſight.
And for deſpit he dranke mochel more
An hundred part than he had don before,
And right anon this curſed irous wretche
This knightes ſone let before him fetche,
Commanding him he ſhuld before him ſtond;
And ſodenly he took his bow in hond,
And up the ſtreng he pulled to his ere,
And with an arwe he ſlow the child right ther.
  Now whether have I a ſiker hond or non?
Quod he; is all my might and minde agon?
Hath win bereved me min eyen ſight?
  What ſhuld I tell the anſwer of the knight?
His ſon was ſlain, ther is no more to ſay.
Beth ware therfore with lordes for to play,
Singeth Placebo, and I ſhal if I can,
But if it be unto a poure man:
To a poure man men ſhuld his vices telle,
But not to a lord, though he ſhuld go to helle.

v. 7657. *Singeth Placebo*] The alluſion is to an anthem in the Romiſh church from *Pſalm* cxvi. 9, which in the Vulgate ſtands thus; *Placebo Domino in regione vivorum.* Hence the complacent brother in The Marchant's Tale is called *Placebo.*

Lo, irous Cirus, thilke Persien,
How he destroyed the river of Gisen,
For that an hors of his was dreint therin
Whan that he wente Babilon to win:
He made that the river was so smal
That wimmen might it waden over al.
Lo, what, said he, that so wel techen can?
Ne be no felaw to non irous man,
Ne with no wood man walke by the way,
Lest thee repent: I wol no forther say.
Now Thomas, leve brother, leve thin ire,
Thou shalt me find as just as is a squire:
Hold not the devils knif ay to thin herte,
Thin anger doth thee all to sore smerte;
But shew to me all thy confession.
Nay, quod the sike man, by Seint Simon
I have ben shriven this day of my curat;
I have him told al holly min estat.
Nedeth no mo to speke of it, sayth he,
But if me list of min humilitee.
Yeve me than of thy gold to make our cloistre,
Quod he, for many a muscle and many an oistre,

ṽ. 7662. *the river of Gisen*] It is called *Gyndes* in *Seneca*, lib. cit. c. xxi, and in *Herodotus*, l. i.

ṽ. 7666. *That wimmen*] So the best mss. agreeably to the authors just quoted. The editt. have——

That *men* might *ride and* wade, &c.

Sir J. Mandeville tells the story of the Euphrates—"Because that "he had sworn that he sholde putte the ryvere in suche poynt "that a *womman* myghte wel passe there withouten castynge "of of hire clothes," p. 49.

Whan other men han ben ful wel at eſe,
Hath been our food, our cloiſtre for to reſe;
And yet, God wot, unneth the fundament
Parfourmed is, ne of our pavement
N'is not a tile yet within our wones:
By God we owen fourty pound for ſtones.
Now help, Thomas, for him that harwed helle,
For elles mote we our bokes ſelle,
And if ye lacke oure predication,
Than goth this world all to deſtruction;
For who ſo fro this world wold us bereve,
So God me ſave, Thomas, by your leve
He wold bereve out of this world the ſonne;
For who can teche and worken as we conne?
And that is not of litel time (quod he)
But ſithen Elie was and Eliſee
Han freres ben, that find I of record,
In charitee, ythonked be our Lord.
Now Thomas, help for Seinte Charitee.
And doun anon he ſette him on his knee.
This ſike man woxe wel neigh wood for ire;
He wolde that the frere had ben a-fire
With his falſe diſſimulation.
Swiche thing as is in my poſſeſſion,
Quod he, that may I yeve you, and non other.
Ye ſain me thus, how that I am your brother.
Ye certes, quod this frere, ye truſteth wel;
I took our dame the letter of our ſele.

ỷ. 7710. *the letter of our ſele*] There is a letter of this kind

Now wel, quod he, and ſomwhat ſhal I yeve
Unto your holy covent while I live;
And in thin hond thou ſhalt it have anon,
On this condition, and other non,
That thou depart it ſo, my dere brother,
That every frere have as moche as other:
This ſhalt thou ſwere on thy profeſſion
Withouten fraud or cavilation.
I ſwere it, quod the frere, upon my faith;
And therwithal his hond in his he layth.
Lo here my faith; in me ſhal be no lak.
Than put thin hond adoun right by my bak,
Saide this man, and grope wel behind
Benethe my buttok, ther thou ſhalte find
A thing that I have hid in privetee.
A! thought this frere, that ſhal go with me;
And doun his hond he launcheth to the cliſte,
In hope for to finden ther a giſte.
And whan this ſike man felte this frere
About his towel gropen ther and here,
Amid his hond he let the frere a fart:
Ther n'is no capel drawing in a cart
That might han let a fart of ſwiche a ſoun.
The frere up ſterte as doth a wood leoun:

in *Stevens*, *Supp. to Dugd.* vol. ii. *App.* p. 370; "Fratres Prædicatores, Warwicc. admittunt Thomam Cannings et uxorem ejus Agnetem ad participationem omnium bonorum operum conventûs ejuſdem." It is under ſeal of the Prior, 4 *Non. Octob. An. Dom.* 1347.

A! falſe cherl, quod he, for Goddes bones
This haſt thou in deſpit don for the nones:
Thou ſhalt abie this fart if that I may.
  His meinie, which that herden this affray,
Came leping in, and chaſed out the frere,
And forth he goth with a ful angry chere,
And fet his felaw ther as lay his ſtore:
He loked as it were a wilde bore,
And grinte with his teeth, ſo was he wroth.
A ſturdy pas doun to the court he goth,
Wher as ther woned a man of gret honour,
To whom that he was alway confeſſour:
This worthy man was lord of that village.
This frere came, as he were in a rage,
Wher as this lord ſat eting at his bord:
Unnethes might the frere ſpeke o word,
Til atte laſt he ſaide, God you ſee!
  This lord gan loke, and ſaide, *Benedicite!*
What? Frere John, what maner world is this?
I ſee wel that ſom thing ther is amis;
Ye loken as the wood were ful of theves.
Sit doun anon, and tell me what your greve is,

ỽ. 7740.] The remainder of this Tale is omitted in mſſ. *B.* *G.* and *Bod.* ς. and inſtead of it they give us the following lame and impotent concluſion;

He ne had nozt ellis for his ſermon
To part among his brethren when he cam home.
And thus is this Tale idon,
For we were almoſt att the toun.

I only mention this to ſhew what liberties ſome copiſts have taken with our Author.

And it ſhal ben amended if I may.
I have, quod he, had a deſpit to day,
God yelde you, adoun in your village,
That in this world ther n'is ſo poure a page
That he n'olde have abhominatioun
Of that I have received in youre toun;
And yet ne greveth me nothing ſo ſore
As that the olde cherl with lokkes hore
Blaſphemed hath oure holy covent eke.
Now maiſter, quod this lord, I you beſeke.
No maiſter, Sire, quod he, but ſervitour,
Though I have had in ſcole that honour.
God liketh not that men us Rabi call
Neither in market ne in your large hall.
No force, quod he, but tell me all your greſe.
Sire, quod this frere, an odious miſcheſe
This day betid is to min ordre and me,
And ſo *per conſequens* to eche degree
Of holy chirche, God amende it ſone.
Sire, quod the lord, ye wot what is to don:
Diſtempre you not, ye ben my confeſſour;
Ye ben the ſalt of the erthe and the ſavour:
For Goddes love your patience now hold;
Telle me your greſe. And he anon him told
As ye han herd before, ye wot wel what.
The lady of the hous ay ſtille ſat
Til ſhe had herde what the frere ſaid.
Ey, Goddes moder, quod ſhe, bliſful maid!

Is ther ought elles? tell me faithfully.
Madame, quod he, how thinketh you therby?
How that me thinketh? quod ſhe; ſo God me ſpede
I ſay a cherle hath don a cherles dede.
What ſhuld I ſay? God let him never the;
His ſike hed is ful of vanitee:
I hold him in a maner freneſie.
  Madame, quod he, by God I ſhal not lie
But I in other wiſe may ben awreke;
I ſhal diffame him over all ther I ſpeke;
This falſe blaſphemour, that charged me
To parten that wol not departed be
To every man ylike, with meſchance.
  The lord ſat ſtille as he were in a trance,
And in his herte he rolled up and doun
How had this cherl imaginatioun
To ſhewen ſwiche a probleme to the frere.
Never erſt or now ne herd I ſwiche matere;
I trow the devil put it in his mind.
In all arſmetrike ſhal ther no man find
Beforn this day of ſwiche a queſtion.
Who ſhulde make a demonſtration
That every man ſhuld han ylike his part
As of a ſoun or ſavour of a fart?
O nice proude cherl! I ſhrewe his face.
  Lo, Sires, quod the lord, with harde grace,
Who ever herd of ſwiche a thing or now?
To every man ylike! tell me how.

It is an impoſſible, it may not be:
Ey, nice cherl! God let him never the.
The rombling of a fart, and every ſoun,
N'is but of aire reverberatioun,
And ever it waſteth lite and lite away;
Ther n'is no man can demen, by my fay,
If that it were departed equally.
What? lo my cherl, lo yet how ſhrewedly
Unto my confeſſour to-day he ſpake!
I hold him certain a demoniake.
Now ete your mete, and let the cherl go play;
Let him go honge himſelf a devil way.
  Now ſtood the lordes ſquier atte bord
That carf his mete, and herde word by word
Of all this thing of which I have you ſayd.
  My Lord, quod he, be ye not evil apaid;
I coude telle for a goune-cloth
To you, Sire Frere, ſo that ye be not wroth,
How that this fart ſhuld even ydeled be
Amonge your covent, if it liked thee.
  Tell, quod the lord, and thou ſhalt have anon
A goune-cloth, by God and by Seint John.
  My Lord, quod he, whan that the weder is faire,
Withouten winde or pertourbing of aire,
Let bring a cart-whele here into this hall,
But loke that it have his ſpokes all;
Twelf ſpokes hath a cart-whele communly;
And bring me than twelf freres, wete ye why?

For threttene is a covent as I geſſe:
Your confeſſour here for his worthineſſe
Shal parfourme up the noumbre of his covent.
Than ſhull they knele adoun by on aſſent,
And to every ſpokes end in this manere
Ful ſadly lay his noſe ſhal a frere;
Your noble confeſſour, ther God him ſave,
Shal hold his noſe upright under the nave.
Than ſhal this cherl, with bely ſtif and tought
As any tabour, hider ben ybrought;
And ſet him on the whele right of this cart
Upon the nave, and make him let a fart,
And ye ſhull ſeen, up peril of my lif,
By veray preef that is demonſtratif,
That equally the ſoun of it wol wende,
And eke the ſtinke, unto the ſpokes ende,
Save that this worthy man, your confeſſour,
(Becauſe he is a man of gret honour)
Shal han the firſte fruit, as reſon is.
The noble uſage of freres yet it is
The worthy men of hem ſhul firſt be ſerved,
And certainly he hath it wel deſerved;
He hath to-day taught us ſo mochel good,
With preching in the pulpit ther he ſtood,
That I may vouchefauf, I ſay for me,
He hadde the firſte ſmel of fartes three,
And ſo wold all his brethren hardely,
He bereth him ſo faire and holyly.

The lord, the lady, and eche man, ſave the frere,
Sayden that Jankin ſpake in this matere
As wel as Euclide or elles Ptholomee.
Touching the cherl they ſayden, Subtiltee
And highe wit made him ſpeken as he ſpake;
He n'is no fool ne no demoniake.
And Jankin hath ywonne a newe goune.
My Tale is don, we ben almoſt at toune.

THE CLERKES PROLOGUE.

Sire Clerk of Oxenforde, our Hoſte ſaid,
Ye ride as ſtille and coy as doth a maid
Were newe ſpouſed, ſitting at the bord;
This day ne herd I of your tonge a word.
I trow ye ſtudie abouten ſom ſophime;
But Salomon ſaith that every thing hath time.
For Goddes ſake as beth of better chere,
It is no time for to ſtudien here.
Tell us ſom mery Tale by your fay;
For what man that is entred in a play
He nedes moſt unto the play aſſent.
But precheth not, as freres don in Lent,
To make us for our olde ſinnes wepe,
Ne that thy Tale make us not to ſlepe.

ỽ. 7879. *Were newe ſpouſed*] It has been obſerved in n. upon ver. 812, that Chaucer frequently omits the governing pronoun before his verbs: the inſtances there cited were of perſonal pronouns. In this line, and ſome others which I ſhall point out here, the relatives *who* or *which* are omitted in the ſame manner. See ver. 7411, 13035, 16049.

Tell us fom mery thing of aventures;
Your termes, your coloures, and your figures,
Kepe hem in ftore til fo be ye endite
Hie ftile, as whan that men to kinges write.
Speketh fo plain at this time, I you pray,
That we may underftonden what ye fay.
This worthy Clerk benignely anfwerde;
Hofte, quod he, I am under your yerde,
Ye have of us as now the governance,
And therfore wolde I do you obeyfance,
As fer as refon afketh hardely:
I wol you tell a Tale which that I
Lerned at Padowe of a worthy clerk,
As preved by his wordes and his werk:
He is now ded and nailed in his chefte,
I pray to God fo yeve his foule refte.
Fraunceis Petrark, the Laureat poete,
Highte this clerk, whos rethorike fwete
Enlumined all Itaille of poetrie,
As Lynyan did of philofophie

ỽ. 7910. *Lynyan*] Or *Linian*. The perfon meant was an eminent lawyer, and made a great noife (as we fay) in his time. His name of late has been fo little known that I believe nobody has been angry with the editt. for calling him *Livian*. There is fome account of him in *Panzirolus, de Cl. Leg. Interpret.* l. iii. c. xxv.; "Joannes a *Lignano*, agri Mediolanenfis vico, oriun-"dus, et ob id *Lignanus* dictus," *&c.* One of his works, entitled *Tractatus de Bello*, is extant in mf. *Reg.* 13, B. ix. He compiled it at Bologna in the year 1360.—He was not however a mere lawyer; Chaucer fpeaks of him as excelling alfo in *philofophie*; and fo does his epitaph, *ap. Panzirol.* l. c.;

Or law, or other art particulere;
But Deth, that wol not ſuffre us dwellen here,
But as it were a twinkling of an eye,
Hem both hath ſlaine, and alle we ſhul dye.
But forth to tellen of this worthy man
That taughte me this Tale as I began,
I ſay that firſt he with highe ſtile enditeth
(Or he the body of his Tale writeth)
A proheme, in the which deſcriveth he
Piemont, and of Saluces the contree,
And ſpeketh of Apennin the hilles hie,
That ben the boundes of weſt Lumbardie,
And of Mount Veſulus in ſpecial,
Wher as the Poo out of a welle ſmal
Taketh his firſte ſpringing and his ſours,
That eſtward ay encreſeth in his cours
To Emelie ward, to Ferare and Veniſe,
The which a longe thing were to deviſe;

— — — — —

Gloria *Lignani*, titulo decoratus utroque,
Legibus et ſacro Canone dives erat,
Alter Ariſtoteles, Hippocras erat et Ptolomæus—

The only ſpecimen of his philoſophy that I have met with is in mſ. *Harl.* 1006. It is an aſtrological work, entitled "Con-"cluſiones Judicii compoſite per Domnum Johannem *de Ly-*"*viano* (l. *Lyniano*) ſuper coronacione Domni Urbani Pape VI. "A. D. 1378, 18th April, &c. cum Diagrammate." He alſo ſupported the election of Urban as a lawyer, *Panzirol.* l. c. *et Annal. Ecclеſ. a Raynaldo, tom.* xvii. He muſt therefore have lived at leaſt to 1378, though in the printed epitaph he is ſaid to have died in 1368, 16th Febr.

ỽ. 7927. *To Emelie ward*] One of the regions of Italy was called Æmilia, from the *Via Æmilia*, which croſſed it from Pla-

And trewely, as to my jugement,
Me thinketh it a thing impertinent,
Save that he wol conveyen his matere:
But this is the Tale which that ye mow here.

THE CLERKES TALE.

THER is right at the weſt ſide of Itaille,
Doun at the rote of Veſulus the cold,
A luſty plain habundant of vitaille,
Ther many a toun and tour thou maiſt behold,
That founded were in time of fathers old,
And many another delitable ſighte,
And Saluces this noble contree highte.

A markis whilom lord was of that lond,
As were his worthy elders him before,
And obeyſant, ay redy to his hond,
Were all his lieges bothe leſſe and more:
Thus in delit he liveth, and hath don yore,
Beloved and drad, thurgh favour of Fortune,
Both of his lordes and of his commune.

centia to Rimini. Placentia ſtood upon the Po, *Pitiſc. Lex. Ant. Rom.* in v. *Via Æmilia.* Petrarch's deſcription of this part of the courſe of the Po is a little different. He ſpeaks of it as dividing the Æmilian and Flaminian regions from Venice--"Æmi-"iliam atque Flaminiam Venetiamque diſcriminans." But our Author's *Emelie* is plainly taken from him.—As the following Tale is almoſt wholly tranſlated from Petrarch, [ſee the *Diſcourſe, &c.* § 20,] it would be endleſs to cite particular paſſages from the orignal, eſpecially as it is printed in all the editions of Petrarch's works; it is there entitled *De Obedientiâ et Fide Uxoriâ Mythologia.*

The Clerkes Tale] Walter the Marquis of Saluce proveth the pacience of his wife Griſild by thre moſt ſharp trialls. *Urry.*

Therwith he was, to ſpeken of linage,
The gentileſt yborne of Lumbardie,
A faire perſon, and ſtrong, and yong of age,
And ful of honour and of curteſie;
Diſcret ynough, his contree for to gie,
Sauf in ſom thinges that he was to blame,
And Walter was this yonge lordes name.

I blame him thus, that he conſidered nought
In time coming what might him betide,
But on his luſt preſent was all his thought,
And for to hauke and hunt on every ſide;
Wel neigh all other cures let he ſlide;
And eke he n'old (and that was worſt of all)
Wedden no wif for ought that might befall.

Only that point his peple bare ſo ſore
That flockmel on a day to him they went,
And on of hem, that wiſeſt was of lore,
(Or elles that the lord wold beſt aſſent
That he ſhuld tell him what the peple ment,
Or elles coud he wel ſhew ſwiche matere)
He to the markis ſaid as ye ſhull here.

O noble Markis! your humanitee
Aſſureth us and yeveth us hardineſſe,
As oft as time is of neceſſitee
That we to you mow tell our hevineſſe;
Accepteth, Lord, than of your gentilleſſe
That we with pitous herte unto you plaine,
And let your eres nat my vois diſdaine.

Al have I not to don in this matere
More than another man hath in this place,
Yet for as moch as ye, my Lord ſo dere,
Han alway ſhewed me favour and grace,
I dare the better aſke of you a ſpace
Of audience to ſhewen our requeſt,
And ye, my Lord, to don right as you leſt.

For certes, Lord, ſo wel us liketh you
And all your werke, and ever have don, that we
Ne couden not ourſelf deviſen how
We mighten live in more felicitee,
Save o thing, Lord, if it your wille be
That for to be a wedded man you leſt
Than were your peple in ſoverain hertes reſt.

Boweth your nekke under the bliſful yok
Of ſoveraintee, and not of ſerviſe,
Which that men clepen Spouſaile or Wedlok:
And thinketh, Lord, among your thoughtes wiſe,
How that our dayes paſſe in ſondry wiſe;
For though we ſlepe, or wake, or rome, or ride,
Ay fleth the time, it wol no man abide.

And though your grene youthe floure as yet,
In crepeth age alway as ſtill as ſton,
And deth manaſeth every age, and ſmit
In eche eſtat, for ther eſcapeth non:
And al ſo certain as we knowe eche on
That we ſhul die, as uncertain we all
Ben of that day whan deth ſhal on us fall.

Accepteth than of us the trewe entent,
That never yet refuſeden your heſt,
And we wol, Lord, if that ye wol aſſent,
Cheſe you a wife in ſhort time at the meſt
Borne of the gentilleſt and of the beſt
Of all this lond, ſo that it oughte ſeme
Honour to God and you, as we can deme.

Deliver us out of all this beſy drede,
And take a wif for highe Goddes ſake;
For if it ſo befell, as God forbede,
That thurgh your deth your linage ſhulde ſlake,
And that a ſtrange ſucceſſour ſhuld take
Your heritage, o! wo were us on live;
Wherfore we pray you haſtily to wive.

Hir meke praiere and hir pitous chere
Made the markis for to han pitee.
Ye wol, quod he, min owen peple dere,
To that I never er thought conſtrainen me:
I me rejoyced of my libertee,
That ſelden time is found in mariage;
Ther I was free I moſte ben in ſervage.

But natheles I ſee your trewe entent,
And truſt upon your wit, and have don ay;
Wherfore of my free will I wol aſſent
To wedden me as ſone as ever I may:
But ther as ye han profred me to-day
To cheſen me a wif, I you releſe
That chois, and pray you of that profer ceſe.

For God it wot that children often ben
Unlike hir worthy eldres hem before:
Bountee cometh al of God, nôt of the ſtren
Of which they ben ygendred and ybore:
I truſt in Goddes bountee, and therfore
My mariage, and min eſtat, and reſt,
I him betake; he may don as him leſt.

Let me alone in cheſing of my wif;
That charge upon my bak I wol endure:
But I you pray and charge upon your lif
That what wif that I take ye me aſſure
To worſhip hire, while that hire lif may dure,
In word and werk both here and elles where,
As ſhe an emperoures doughter were.

And forthermore this ſhuln ye ſwere, that ye
Again my chois ſhul never grutch ne ſtrive;
For ſith I ſhal forgo my libertee
At your requeſt, as ever mote I thrive
Ther as min herte is ſet ther wol I wive:
And but ye wol aſſent in ſwiche manere
I pray you ſpeke no more of this matere.

With hertly will they ſworen and aſſenten
To all this thing, ther ſaide not o wight nay,
Beſeching him of grace, or that they wenten,
That he wold granten hem a certain day
Of his ſpouſaile as ſone as ever he may,
For yet alway the peple ſomwhat dred
Leſt that this markis wolde no wif wed.

He granted hem a day, ſwiche as him leſt,
On which he wold be wedded ſikerly,
And ſaid he did all this at hir requeſt;
And they with humble herte ful buxumly,
Kneling upon hir knees ful reverently,
Him thonken all: and thus they han an end
Of hir entente, and home agen they wend.
And hereupon he to his officeres
Commandeth for the feſte to purvay,
And to his privee knightes and ſquieres
Swiche charge he yave as hem liſt on hem lay,
And they to his commandement obey,
And eche of hem doth al his diligence
To do unto the feſte al reverence.

Pars ſecunda.

Nought fer fro thilke paleis honourable,
Wher as this markis ſhope his mariage,
Ther ſtood a thorpe, of ſighte delitable,
In which that poure folk of that village
Hadden hir beſtes and hir herbergage,
And of hir labour toke hir ſuſtenance,
After that the erthe yave hem habundance.
Among this poure folk ther dwelt a man
Which that was holden poureſt of hem all,
But highe God ſomtime ſenden can
His grace unto a litel oxes ſtall;
Janicola men of that thorpe him call:
A doughter had he, faire ynough to ſight,
And Griſildis this yonge maiden hight.

But for to ſpeke of vertuous beautee,
Than was ſhe on the faireſt under ſonne.
Ful pourely yfoſtred up was ſhe;
No likerous luſt was in hire herte yronne:
Wel ofter of the well than of the tonne
She dranke; and for ſhe wolde vertue pleſe
She knew wel labour but non idel eſe.

But though this mayden tendre were of age,
Yet in the breſt of hire virginitee
Ther was encloſed ſad and ripe corage,
And in gret reverence and charitee
Hire olde poure fader foſtred ſhe:
A few ſheep ſpinning on the feld ſhe kept;
She wolde not ben idel til ſhe ſlept.

And whan ſhe homward came ſhe wolde bring
Wortes and other herbes times oft,
The which ſhe ſhred and ſethe for hire living,
And made hire bed ful hard and nothing ſoft;
And ay ſhe kept hire fadres lif on loft
With every obeiſance and diligence
That child may don to fadres reverence.

Upon Griſilde, this poure creature,
Ful often ſithe this markis ſette his eye,
As he on hunting rode paraventure;
And whan it fell that he might hire eſpie
He not with wanton loking of folie
His eyen caſt on hire, but in ſad wiſe
Upon hire chere he wold him oft aviſe;

Commending in his herte hire womanhede,
And eke hire vertue, paſſing any wight
Of ſo yong age as wel in chere as dede:
For though the peple have no gret inſight
In vertue, he conſidered ful right
Hire bountee, and diſpoſed that he wold
Wedde hire only if ever he wedden ſhold.

The day of wedding came, but no wight can
Tellen what woman that it ſhulde be,
For which marvaille wondred many a man,
And ſaiden, whan they were in privetee,
Wol not our lord yet leve his vanitee?
Wol he not wedde? Alas, alas the while!
Why wol he thus himſelf and us begile?

But natheles this markis hath do make
Of gemmes ſette in gold and in aſure
Broches and ringes, for Griſildes ſake;
And of hire clothing toke he the meſure
Of a maiden like unto hire ſtature,
And eke of other ornamentes all
That unto ſwiche a wedding ſhulde fall.

The time of underne of the ſame day
Approcheth that this wedding ſhulde be,

℣. 8136. *The time of underne*] The Gloſſary explains this rightly to mean the third hour of the day, or nine of the clock. In ver. 8857, where this word is uſed again, the original has—*hora tertia*; in this place it has—*hora prandii*: from whence we may collect that in Chaucer's time the third hour, or *underne*, was the uſual hour of dinner.—I have never met with

And all the paleis put was in array,
Both halle and chambres, eche in his degree,
Houſes of office ſtuffed with plentee;
Ther mayſt thou ſee of deinteous vitaille
That may be found as fer as laſteth Itaille.
This real markis richely arraide,
Lordes and ladies in his compagnie,
The which unto the feſte weren praide,
And of his retenue the bachelerie,
With many a ſoun of ſondry melodie,
Unto the village of the which I told
In this array the righte way they hold.
Griſilde of this (God wot) ful innocent
That for hire ſhapen was all this array,
To fetchen water at a welle is went,
And cometh home as ſone as ever ſhe may;
For wel ſhe had herd ſay that thilke day
The markis ſhulde wedde, and if ſhe might
She wolde fayn han ſeen ſom of that ſight.
She thought I wol with other maidens ſtond,
That ben my felawes, in our dore, and ſee
The markiſeſſe, and therto wol I ſond

any etymology of this word *underne*, but the following paſſage might lead one to ſuſpect that it had ſome reference to *under-noon*. "In the town-book belonging to the corporation of Stan-"ford, 28 E. IV. it is ordeyned that no perſon opyn ther ſack, "or ſet ther corn to ſale, afore hour of ten of the bell, or els "the *undernone* bell be rongyn." *Peck's Deſid. Cur.* vol. i. b. vi. p. 36. In the *Iſland. Dict. ondverne* is rendered *Mane diei.*

To don at home, as ſone as it may be,
The labour which that longeth unto me,
And than I may at leiſer hire behold,
If ſhe this way unto the Caſtel hold.
  And as ſhe wolde over the threſwold gon
The markis came and gan hire for to call,
And ſhe ſet doun hire water-pot anon
Beſide the threſwold in an oxes ſtall,
And doun upon hire knees ſhe gan to fall,
And with ſad countenance kneleth ſtill,
Til ſhe had herd what was the lordes will.
  This thoughtful markis ſpake unto this maid
Ful ſoberly, and ſaid in this manere;
Wher is your fader, Griſildis? he ſaid.
And ſhe with reverence in humble chere
Anſwered, Lord, he is al redy here.
And in ſhe goth withouten lenger lette,
And to the markis ſhe hire fader fette.
  He by the hond than toke this poure man,
And ſaide thus whan he him had aſide;
Janicola, I neither may ne can
Lenger the pleſance of min herte hide;
If that thou vouchefauf, what ſo betide,
Thy doughter wol I take or that I wend
As for my wif unto hire lives end.
  Thou loveſt me, that wot I wel certain,
And art my faithful liegeman ybore,
And all that liketh me, I dare wel ſain,

It liketh thee, and ſpecially therfore
Tell me that point that I have ſaid before,
If that thou wolt unto this purpos drawe,
To taken me as for thy ſon in lawe?
  This ſoden cas this man aſtoned ſo
That red he wex, abaiſt, and al quaking
He ſtood; unnethes ſaid he wordes mo
But only thus; Lord, quod he, my willing
Is as ye wol, ne ageins your liking
I wol no thing, min owen Lord ſo dere;
Right as you liſt governeth this matere.
  Than wol I, quod this markis ſoftely,
That in thy chambre I, and thou, and ſhe,
Have a collation; and woſt thou why?
For I wol aſk hire if it hire wille be
To be my wif, and reule hire after me?
And all this ſhal be don in thy preſence;
I wol not ſpeke out of thin audience.
  And in the chambre, while they were aboute
The tretee, which as ye ſhul after here,
The peple came into the hous withoute,
And wondred hem in how honeſt manere
Ententifly ſhe kept hire fader dere:
But utterly Griſildis wonder might,
For never erſt ne ſaw ſhe ſwiche a ſight.
  No wonder is though that ſhe be aſtoned
To ſee ſo gret a geſt come in that place,
She never was to non ſwiche geſtes woned,

For which ſhe loked with ful pale face.
But ſhortly forth this matere for to chace,
Thiſe arn the wordes that the markis ſaid
To this benigne veray faithful maid.
  Griſilde, he ſaid, ye ſhuln wel underſtond
It liketh to your fader and to me
That I you wedde, and eke it may ſo ſtond,
As I ſuppoſe, ye wol that it ſo be:
But thiſe demaundes aſke I firſt (quod he)
That ſin it ſhal be don in haſty wiſe
Wol ye aſſent, or elles you aviſe?
  I ſay this, be ye redy with good herte
To all my luſt, and that I freely may,
As me beſt thinketh, do you laugh or ſmerte,
And never ye to grutchen, night ne day,
And eke whan I ſay Ya ye ſay not Nay,
Neither by word ne frouning countenance?
Swere this, and here I ſwere our alliance.
  Wondring upon this thing, quaking for drede,
She ſaide, Lord, indigne and unworthy
Am I to thilke honour that ye me bede,
But as ye wol yourſelf right ſo wol I:
And here I ſwere that never willingly
In werk ne thought I n'ill you diſobeie
For to be ded, though me were loth to deie.
  This is ynough, Griſilde min, quod he.
And forth he goth with a ful ſobre chere
Out at the dore, and after than came ſhe,

And to the peple he ſaid in this manere;
This is my wif, quod he, that ſtondeth here;
Honoureth her, and loveth hire, I pray,
Who ſo me loveth; ther n'is no more to ſay.
 And for that nothing of hire olde gere
She ſhulde bring into his hous, he bad
That women ſhuld deſpoilen hire right there,
Of which thiſe ladies weren nothing glad
To handle hire clothes wherin ſhe was clad:
But natheles this maiden bright of hew
Fro foot to hed they clothed han all new.
 Hire heres han they kempt, that lay untreſſed
Ful rudely, and with hir fingres ſmal
A coroune on hire hed they han ydreſſed,
And ſette hire ful of nouches gret and ſmal.
Of hire array what ſhuld I make a tale?
Unneth the peple hire knew for hire fairneſſe
Whan ſhe tranſmewed was in ſwiche richeſſe.
 This markis hath hire ſpouſed with a ring
Brought for the ſame cauſe, and than hire ſette
Upon an hors ſnow-white and wel ambling,
And to his paleis, or he lenger lette,
(With joyful peple that hire lad and mette)

ỽ. 8258. *ful of nouches*] The common reading is *ouches*, but I have retained the reading of the beſt mſſ. as it may poſſibly aſſiſt ſomebody to diſcover the meaning of the word. I obſerve too that it is ſo written in the inventory of the effects of H. V. *Rot. Parl.* 2. H. VI. n. 31; "Item 6 broches et *nouches* d'or gar"nis de divers garnades pois 3rd d'or pris 35s.

Conveyed hire; and thus the day they ſpende
In revel til the ſonne gan deſcende.
  And ſhortly forth this Tale for to chace,
I ſay that to this newe markiſeſſe
God hath ſwiche favour ſent hire of his grace,
That it ne ſemeth not by likelineſſe
That ſhe was borne and fed in rudeneſſe,
As in a cote or in an oxes ſtall,
But nouriſhed in an emperoures hall.
  To every wight ſhe waxen is ſo dere
And worſhipful, that folk ther ſhe was bore,
And fro hire birthe knew hire yere by yere,
Unnethes trowed they, but dorſt han ſwore
That to Janicle, of which I ſpake before,
She doughter n'as; for as by conjecture
Hem thoughte ſhe was another creature.
  For though that ever vertuous was ſhe,
She was encreſed in ſwiche excellence
Of thewes good, yſet in high bountee,
And ſo diſcrete, and faire of eloquence,
So benigne, and ſo digne of reverence,
And coude ſo the peples herte enbrace,
That eche hire loveth that loketh on hire face.
  Not only of Saluces in the toun
Publiſhed was the bountee of hire name,
But eke beſide in many a regioun;
If on ſaith wel another ſaith the ſame:
So ſpredeth of hire hie bountee the fame,

That men and women, yong as wel as old,
Gon to Saluces upon hire to behold.
  Thus Walter lowly, nay but really,
Wedded with fortunat honeſtee,
In Goddes pees liveth ful eſily
At home, and grace ynough outward had he:
And for he ſaw that under low degree
Was honeſt vertue hid, the peple him held
A prudent man, and that is ſeen ful ſeld.
  Not only this Griſildis thurgh hire wit
Coude all the fete of wiſly homlineſſe,
But eke whan that the cas required it
The comune profit coude ſhe redreſſe:
Ther n'as diſcord, rancour, ne hevineſſe,
In all the lond that ſhe ne coude appeſe,
And wiſely bring hem all in hertes eſe.
  Though that hire huſbond abſent were or non
If gentilmen or other of that contree
Were wroth ſhe wolde bringen hem at on.
So wiſe and ripe wordes hadde ſhe,
And jugement of ſo grete equitee,
That ſhe from heven ſent was, as men wend,
Peple to ſave, and every wrong to amend.
  Not longe time after that this Griſilde
Was wedded ſhe a doughter hath ybore,
All had hire lever han borne a knave childe:
Glad was the markis and his folk therfore,
For though a maiden childe come all before

She may unto a knave child atteine,
By likelyhed, sin she n'is not barreine.

Pars tertia.

Ther fell, as it befalleth times mo,
Whan that this childe had souked but a throwe,
This markis in his herte longed so
To tempt his wif, hire sadnesse for to knowe,
That he ne might out of his herte throwe
This marveillous desir his wif to assay:
Needles, God wot, he thought hire to affray.

He had assaied hire ynough before,
And found hire ever good: what nedeth it
Hire for to tempt, and alway more and more?
Though som men praise it for a subtil wit;
But as for me, I say that evil it sit
To assay a wif whan that it is no nede,
And putten hire in anguish and in drede.

For which this markis wrought in this manere:
He came a-night alone ther as she lay
With sterne face and with full trouble chere,
And sayde thus, Grisilde, (quod he) that day
That I you toke out of your poure array,
And put you in estat of high noblesse,
Ye han it not forgetten, as I gesse;

I say, Grisilde, this present dignitee,
In which that I have put you, as I trow,
Maketh you not forgetful for to be
That I you toke in poure estat ful low,
For ony wele ye mote yourselven know.

Take hede of every word that I you ſay,
Ther is no wight that hereth it but we tway.
Ye wote yourſelf wel how that ye came here
Into this hous, it is not long ago,
And though to me ye be right leſe and dere,
Unto my gentils ye be nothing ſo:
They ſay to hem it is gret ſhame and wo
For to be ſuggetes, and ben in ſervage
To thee, that borne art of a ſmal linage.
And namely ſin thy doughter was ybore
Thiſe wordes han they ſpoken douteles;
But I deſire, as I have don before,
To live my lif with hem in reſt and pees:
I may not in this cas be reccheles:
I mote do with thy doughter for the beſt,
Not as I wold, but as my gentils leſt.
And yet, God wote, this is ful loth to me:
But natheles withouten youre weting
I wol nought do; but thus wol I (quod he)
That ye to me aſſenten in this thing;
Shew now youre patience in youre werking
That ye me hight and ſwore in youre village
The day that maked was our mariage.
Whan ſhe had herd all this ſhe not ameved
Neyther in word, in chere, ne countenance,
(For as it ſemed ſhe was not agreved)
She ſayde, Lord, all lith in your pleſance;
My child and I with hertely obeiſance

Ben youres all, and ye may ſave or ſpill
Your owen thing: werketh after your will.
Ther may no thing, ſo God my ſoule ſave,
Like unto you that may diſpleſen me;
Ne I deſire nothing for to have,
Ne drede for to leſe, ſauf only ye:
This will is in myn herte, and ay ſhal be,
No length of time or deth may this deface,
Ne change my corage to an other place.
Glad was this markis for hire anſwering,
But yet he feined as he were not ſo;
Al drery was his chere and his loking,
Whan that he ſhuld out of the chambre go.
Sone after this, a furlong way or two,
He prively hath told all his entent
Unto a man, and to his wif him ſent.
A maner ſergeant was this prive man,
The which he faithful often founden had
In thinges gret, and eke ſwiche folk wel can
Don execution on thinges bad;
The lord knew wel that he him loved and drad.
And whan this ſergeant wiſt his lordes will
Into the chambre he ſtalked him ful ſtill.
Madame, he ſayd, ye mote foryeve it me
Though I do thing to which I am conſtreined;
Ye ben ſo wiſe, that right wel knowen ye
That lordes heſtes may not ben yfeined;
They may wel be bewailed and complained,

But men mote nedes to hir luſt obey,
And ſo wol I; ther n'is no more to ſay.

This child I am commanded for to take.
And ſpake no more, but out the child he hent
Deſpitouſly, and gan a chere to make,
As though he wold have ſlain it or he went.
Griſildis muſt al ſuffer and al conſent;
And as a lambe ſhe ſitteth meke and ſtill,
And let this cruel ſergeant do his will.

Suſpecious was the diffame of this man,
Suſpect his face, ſuſpect his word alſo,
Suſpect the time in which he this began:
Alas! hire doughter, that ſhe loved ſo,
She wende he wold han ſlaien it right tho;
But natheles ſhe neither wept ne ſiked,
Conforming hire to that the markis liked.

But at the laſt to ſpeken ſhe began,
And mekely ſhe to the ſergeant praid
(So as he was a worthy gentilman)
That ſhe might kiſſe hire child or that it deid;
And in hire barme this litel child ſhe leid
With ful ſad face, and gan the child to bliſſe,
And lulled it, and after gan it kiſſe.

And thus ſhe ſayd in hire benigne vois;
Farewel, my child, I ſhal thee never ſee,
But ſin I have thee marked with the crois,
Of thilke fader ybleſſed mote thou be
That for us died upon a crois of tree.

Thy ſoule, litel child, I him betake,
For this night ſhalt thou dien for my ſake.
  I trow that to a norice in this cas
It had ben hard this routhe for to ſee;
Wel might a moder than han cried Alas!
But natheles ſo ſad ſtedfaſt was ſhe
That ſhe endured all adverſitee,
And to the ſergeant mekely ſhe ſayde,
Have here agen your litel yonge mayde.
  Goth now (quod ſhe) and doth my lordes heſt:
And o thing wold I pray you of your grace,
But if my lord forbade you at the leſt,
Burieth this litel body in ſom place
That beſtes ne no briddes it to-race.
But he no word to that purpos wold ſay,
But toke the child, and went upon his way.
  This ſergeant came unto his lord again,
And of Griſildes wordes and hire chere
He told him point for point, in ſhort and plain,
And him preſented with his doughter dere.
Somwhat this lord hath routhe in his manere,
But natheles his purpos held he ſtill,
As lordes don whan they wol have hir will;
  And bad this ſergeant that he prively
Shulde this child ful ſofte wind and wrappe,
With alle circumſtances tendrely,
And carry it in a cofre or in a lappe;
But upon peine his hed of for to ſwappe

That no man ſhulde know of his entent,
Ne whens he came ne whider that he went;
But at Boloigne, unto his ſuſter dere,
That thilke time of Pavie was Counteſſe,
He ſhuld it take and ſhew hire this matere,
Beſeching hire to don hire beſineſſe
This child to foſtren in all gentilleſſe;
And whos child that it was he bade hire hide
From every wight, for ought that may betide.
This ſergeant goth, and hath fulfilde this thing.
But to this marquis now retorne we;
For now goth he ful faſt imagining
If by his wives chere he mighte ſee,
Or by hire wordes apperceive, that ſhe
Were changed; but he never coud hire finde
But ever in on ylike ſad and kinde.
As glad, as humble, as beſy in ſervice
And eke in love, as ſhe was wont to be
Was ſhe to him in every maner wiſe;
Ne of hire doughter not a word ſpake ſhe:
Non accident for non adverſitee
Was ſeen in hire, ne never hire doughters name
Ne nevened ſhe for erneſt ne for game.

ỽ. 8466. *of Pavie*] When the text of this Tale was printed I had not ſufficiently adverted to the reading of the beſt mſſ. which is uniformly *Pauik*. I have little doubt that it ſhould be *Panik* both here and below, ver. 8640, 8814, as in Petrarch the Marquiſſes ſiſter is ſaid to be married to the Count de Panico. In Boccace it is *de Panago*.

Pars quarta.

In this eſtat ther paſſed ben foure yere
Er ſhe with childe was, but as God wold
A knave childe ſhe bare by this Waltere
Ful gracious, and fair for to behold;
And whan that folk it to his fader told,
Not only he but all his contree mery
Was for this childe, and God they thonke and hery.

Whan it was two yere old, and from the breſt
Departed of his norice, on a day
This markis caughte yet another leſt
To tempte his wif yet ofter, if he may.
O! nedeles was ſhe tempted in aſſay:
But wedded men ne connen no meſure
Whan that they finde a patient creature.

Wif, quod this markis, ye han herd or this
My peple ſikely beren our mariage,
And namely ſin my ſone yboren is
Now is it werſe than ever in al our age:
The murmur ſleth myn herte and my corage,
For to myn eres cometh the vois ſo ſmerte
That it wel nie deſtroyed hath myn herte.

Now ſay they thus; Whan Walter is agon
Than ſhal the blood of Janicle ſuccede,
And ben our lord, for other han we non.
Swiche wordes ſayn my peple, it is no drede:
Wel ought I of ſwiche murmur taken hede,

For certainly I drede al ſwiche ſentence,
Though they not plainen in myn audience.
I wolde live in pees if that I might;
Wherfore I am diſpoſed utterly,
As I his ſuſter ſerved er by night,
Right ſo thinke I to ſerve him prively.
This warne I you, that ye not ſodenly
Out of yourſelf for no wo ſhuld outraie;
Beth patient, and therof I you praie.
I have, quod ſhe, ſayd thus, and ever ſhal,
I wol no thing, ne n'ill no thing certain,
But as you liſt: not greveth me at al
Though that my doughter and my ſone be ſlain
At your commandement; that is to ſain,
I have not had no part of children twein
But firſt ſikeneſſe and after wo and peine.
Ye ben my lord, doth with your owen thing
Right as you liſt; aſketh no rede of me;
For as I left at home al my clothing
Whan I came firſt to you, right ſo (quod ſhe)
Left I my will and al my libertee,
And toke your clothing; wherfore I you prey
Doth your pleſance, I wol youre luſt obey.
And certes, if I hadde preſcience
Your will to know er ye your luſt me told,
I wold it do withouten negligence:
But now I wote your luſt, and what ye wold,
All your pleſance ferme and ſtable I hold;

For wiſt I that my deth might do you eſe
Right gladly wold I dien you to pleſe.
  Deth may not maken no compariſoun
Unto your love. And whan this markis ſay
The conſtance of his wif, he caſt adoun
His eyen two, and wondreth how ſhe may
In patience ſuffer al this array;
And forth he goth with drery contenance,
But to his herte it was ful gret pleſance.
  This ugly ſergeant in the ſame wiſe
That he hire doughter caughte, right ſo he
(Or werſe, if men can any werſe deviſe)
Hath hent hire ſone, that ful was of beautee:
And ever in on ſo patient was ſhe
That ſhe no chere made of hevineſſe,
But kiſt hire ſone, and after gan it bleſſe.
  Save this ſhe praied him, if that he might,
Hire litel ſone he wold in erthe grave,
His tendre limmes, delicat to ſight,
Fro foules and fro beſtes for to ſave.
But ſhe non anſwer of him mighte have:
He went his way as him no thing ne rought,
But to Bologne he tendrely it brought.
  This markis wondreth ever lenger the more
Upon hire patience; and if that he
Ne hadde ſothly knowen therbefore
That parfitly hire children loved ſhe,
He wold han wend that of ſom ſubtiltee

And of malice, or for cruel corage,
That ſhe had ſuffred this with ſad viſage.
But wel he knew that next himſelf certain
She loved hire children beſt in every wiſe.
But now of women wold I aſken fayn
If thiſe aſſaies mighten not ſuffiſe?
What coud a ſturdy huſbond more deviſe
To preve hire wifhood and hire ſtedfaſtneſſe,
And he continuing ever in ſturdineſſe?
But ther ben folk of ſwiche condition,
That whan they han a certain purpos take
They cannot ſtint of hir entention,
But right as they were bounden to a ſtake
They wol not of hir firſte purpos ſlake:
Right ſo this markis fully hath purpoſed
To tempt his wif as he was firſt diſpoſed.
He waiteth if by word or contenance
That ſhe to him was changed of corage;
But never coud he finden variance;
She was ay on in herte and in viſage;
And ay the further that ſhe was in age
The more trewe (if that it were poſſible)
She was to him in love, and more penible.
For which it ſemed thus, that of hem two
Ther was but o will; for as Walter leſt
The ſame luſt was hire pleſance alſo;
And, God be thanked, all fell for the beſt.
She ſhewed wel for no worldly unreſt

A wif, as of hireſelf, no thing ne ſholde
Wille in effect but as hire huſbond wolde.
The ſclandre of Walter wonder wide ſpradde,
That of a cruel herte he wikkedly,
For he a poure woman wedded hadde,
Hath murdred both his children prively:
Swich murmur was among hem comunly.
No wonder is, for to the peples ere
Ther came no word but that they murdred were.
For which ther as his peple therbefore
Had loved him wel, the ſclandre of his diffame
Made hem that they him hateden therfore:
To ben a mudrour is an hateful name.
But natheles for erneſt ne for game
He of his cruel purpos n'olde ſtente:
To tempt his wif was ſette all his entente.
Whan that his doughter twelf yere was of age
He to the court of Rome, in ſubtil wiſe
Enformed of his will, ſent his meſſage,
Commanding him ſwiche billes to deviſe
As to his cruel purpos may ſuffiſe,
How that the Pope, as for his peples reſt,
Bade him to wed another if him leſt.
I ſay he bade they ſhulden contrefete
The Popes bulles, making mention

ỽ. 8614. *his meſſage*] His meſſenger. See below, ver. 8823. *Meſſage* was commonly uſed for *meſſager* by the French poets. *Du Cange*, in v. *Meſſagarius*.

That he hath leve his firſte wif to lete,
As by the Popes diſpenſation
To ſtinten rancour and diſſention
Betwix his peple and him. Thus ſpake the bull,
The which they han publiſhed at the full.
The rude peple, as no wonder is,
Wenden ful wel that it had ben right ſo;
But whan thiſe tidings came to Griſildis
I deme that hire herte was ful of wo;
But ſhe ylike ſad for evermo
Diſpoſed was, this humble creature,
The adverſitee of fortune al to endure;
Abiding ever his luſt and his pleſance
To whom that ſhe was yeven herte and al,
As to hire veray worldly ſuffiſance.
But ſhortly if this ſtorie tell I ſhal,
This markis writen hath in ſpecial
A lettre, in which he ſheweth his entente,
And ſecretly he to Bologne it ſente
To the Erl of Pavie, which that hadde tho
Wedded his ſuſter, prayed he ſpecially
To bringen home agein his children two
In honourable eſtat al openly;
But o thing he him prayed utterly,
That he to no wight, though men wold enquere,
Shulde not tell whos children that they were,
But ſay the maiden ſhuld ywedded be
Unto the Markis of Saluces anon.

And as this erl was prayed ſo did he;
For at day ſette he on his way is gon
Toward Saluces, and lordes many on
In rich arraie, this maiden for to gide,
Hire yonge brother riding hire beſide.
Arraied was toward hire mariage
This freſhe maiden, ful of gemmes clere,
Hire brother, which that ſeven yere was of age,
Arraied eke ful freſh in his manere:
And thus in gret nobleſſe and with glad chere
Toward Saluces ſhaping hir journay
Fro day to day they riden in hir way.

Pars quinta.

Among al his, after this wicked uſage,
This markis yet his wif to tempten more
To the uttereſte preſe of hire corage,
Fully to have experience and lore
If that ſhe were as ſtedefaſt as before,
He on a day in open audience
Ful boiſtouſly hath ſaid hire this ſentence:
Certes, Griſilde, I had ynough pleſance
To han you to my wif for your goodneſſe,
And for your trouthe and for your obeyſance,
Not for your linage ne for your richeſſe;
But now know I in veray ſothfaſtneſſe
That in gret lordſhip, if I me wel aviſe,
Ther is gret ſervitude in ſondry wiſe.

I may not don as every ploughman may:
My peple me conſtreineth for to take
Another wif, and crien day by day;
And eke the Pope, rancour for to ſlake,
Conſenteth it, that dare I undertake:
And trewely thus moche I wol you ſay,
My newe wif is coming by the way.

Be ſtrong of herte, and void anon hire place,
And thilke dower that ye broughten me
Take it agen; I grant it of my grace.
Returneth to your fadres hous, (quod he)
No man may alway have proſperitee.
With even herte I rede you to endure
The ſtroke of Fortune or of aventure.

And ſhe agen anſwerd in patience;
My Lord, quod ſhe, I wote and wiſt alway
How that betwixen your magnificence
And my poverte no wight ne can ne may
Maken compariſon: it is no nay:
I ne held me never digne in no manere
To be your wif ne yet your chamberere.

And in this hous ther ye me lady made
(The highe God take I for my witneſſe,
And all ſo wiſly he my ſoule glad)
I never held me lady ne maiſtreſſe,
But humble ſervant to your worthineſſe,
And ever ſhal, while that my lif may dure,
Aboven every wordly creature.

That ye ſo longe of your benignitee
Han holden me in honour and nobley,
Wheras I was not worthy for to be,
That thanke I God and you, to whom I prey
Foryelde it you; ther is no more to ſey.
Unto my fader gladly wol I wende,
And with him dwell unto my lives ende.

Ther I was foſtred of a childe ful ſmal;
Til I be ded my lif ther wol I lede,
A widew clene in body, herte, and al:
For ſith I yave to you my maidenhede,
And am your trewe wif, it is no drede,
God ſhilde ſwiche a lordes wif to take
Another man to huſbond or to make.

And of your newe wif God of his grace
So graunte you wele and proſperite,
For I wol gladly yelden hire my place,
In which that I was bliſful wont to be:
For ſith it liketh you, my Lord, (quod ſhe)
That whilom weren all myn hertes reſt,
That I ſhal gon, I wol go whan you leſt.

But ther as ye me profre ſwiche dowaire
As I firſt brought, it is wel in my mind
It were my wretched clothes, nothing faire,
The which to me were hard now for to find.
O goode God! how gentil and how kind
Ye ſemed by your ſpeche and your viſage
The day that maked was oure marriage!

But ſoth is ſaid, algate I find it trewe,
For in effect it preved is on me,
Love is not old as whan that it is newe.
But certes, Lord, for non adverſitee
To dien in this cas, it ſhal not be
That ever in word or werke I ſhal repent
That I you yave min herte in hole entent.

My Lord, ye wote that in my fadres place
Ye dide me ſtripe out of my poure wede,
And richely ye clad me of your grace;
To you brought I nought elles out of drede
But faith, and nakedneſſe, and maidenhede;
And here agen your clothing I reſtore,
And eke your wedding ring, for evermore.

The remenant of your jeweles redy be
Within your chambre, I dare it ſafly ſain.
Naked out of my fadres hous (quod ſhe)
I came, and naked I mote turne again.
All your pleſance wolde I folwe fain;
But yet I hope it be not your entent
That I ſmokles out of your paleis went.

Ye coude not do ſo diſhoneſt a thing,
That thilke wombe, in which your children lay,
Shulde before the peple in my walking
Be ſeen al bare; wherfore I you pray
Let me not like a worme go by the way:
Remembre you, min owen Lord ſo dere,
I was your wif, though I unworthy were.

Wherfore in guerdon of my maidenhede,
Which that I brought and not agen I bere,
As vouchesauf to yeve me to my mede
But swiche a smok as I was wont to were,
That I therwith may wrie the wombe of hire
That was your wif. And here I take my leve
Of you, min owen Lord, lest I you greve.

The smok, quod he, that thou hast on thy bake
Let it be still, and bere it forth with thee.
But wel unnethes thilke word he spake,
But went his way for routhe and for pitee.
Before the folk hireselven stripeth she,
And in hire smok, with foot and hed al bare,
Toward hire fadres hous forth is she fare.

The folk hire folwen weping in hir wey,
And Fortune ay they cursen as they gon;
But she fro weping kept hire eyen drey,
Ne in this time word ne spake she non.
Hire fader, that this tiding herd anon,
Curseth the day and time that Nature
Shope him to ben a lives creature.

For out of doute this olde poure man
Was ever in suspect of hire mariage;
For ever he demed, sin it first began,
That whan the lord fulfilled had his corage
Him wolde thinke it were a disparage
To his estat so lowe for to alight,
And voiden hire as sone as ever he might.

Agein his doughter haſtily goth he,
(For he by noiſe of folk knew hire coming)
And with hire olde cote, as it might be,
He covereth hire, ful ſorwefully weping;
But on hire body might he it not bring,
For rude was the cloth, and more of age
By daies fele than at hire mariage.

Thus with hire fader for a certain ſpace
Dwelleth this flour of wifly patience,
That nother by hire wordes ne hire face,
Beforn the folk, ne eke in hir abſence,
Ne ſhewed ſhe that hire was don offence,
Ne of hire high eſtat no remembrance
Ne hadde ſhe as by hire contenance.

No wonder is, for in hire gret eſtat
Hire goſt was ever in pleine humilitee;
No tendre mouth, no herte delicat,
No pompe, no ſemblant of realtee,
But ful of patient benignitee,
Diſcrete, and prideles, ay honourable,
And to hire huſbond ever meke and ſtable.

Men ſpeke of Job, and moſt for his humbleſſe,
As clerkes whan hem liſt can wel endite,
Namely of men, but as in ſothfaſtneſſe,
Though clerkes preiſen women but a lite,
Ther can no man in humbleſſe him acquite
As woman can, ne can be half ſo trewe
As women ben, but it be falle of newe.

Pars ſexta.

Fro Bologne is this Erl of Pavie come,
Of which the fame up ſprang to more and leſſe;
And to the peples eres all and ſome
Was couth eke that a newe markiſeſſe
He with him brought in ſwiche pomp and richeſſe,
That never was ther ſeen with mannes eye
So noble array in al Weſt Lumbardie.

The markis, which that ſhope and knew all this,
Er that this erl was come ſent his meſſage
For thilke poure ſely Griſildis,
And ſhe with humble herte and glad viſage,
Not with no ſwollen thought in hire corage,
Came at his heſt, and on hire knees hire ſette,
And reverently and wiſely ſhe him grette.

Griſilde, (quod he) my will is utterly
This maiden that ſhal wedded be to me
Received be to-morwe as really
As it poſſible is in myn hous to be;
And eke that every wight in his degree
Have his eſtat in ſitting and ſervice,
And high pleſance, as I can beſt deviſe.

I have no woman ſuffiſant certain
The chambres for to array in ordinance
After my luſt, and therfore wolde I fain
That thin were all ſwiche manere governance;
Thou knoweſt eke of old all my pleſance:
Though thin array be bad, and evil beſey,
Do thou thy devoir at the leſte wey.

Not only, Lord, that I am glad (quod ſhe)
To don your luſt, but I deſire alſo
You for to ſerve and pleſe in my degree
Withouten fainting, and ſhal evermo:
Ne never for no wele ne for no wo
Ne ſhal the goſt within myn herte ſtente
To love you beſt with all my trewe entente.

And with that word ſhe gan the hous to dight,
And tables for to ſette, and beddes make,
And peined her to don all that ſhe might,
Praying the chambereres for Goddes ſake
To haſten hem, and faſte ſwepe and ſhake;
And ſhe, the moſte ſerviceable of all,
Hath every chambre arraied and his hall.

Abouten undern gan this erl alight
That with him brought thiſe noble children twey,
For which the peple ran to ſee the ſight
Of hir array, ſo richely beſey;
And than at erſt amonges hem they ſey
That Walter was no fool, though that him leſt
To change his wif, for it was for the beſt.

For ſhe is fairer, as they demen all,
Than is Griſilde, and more tendre of age,
And fairer fruit betwene hem ſhulde fall,
And more pleſant, for hire high linage:
Hire brother eke ſo faire was of viſage
That hem to ſeen the peple hath caught pleſance,
Commending now the markis governance.

O stormy peple, unsad and ever untrewe,
And undiscrete and changing as a fane,
Delighting ever in rombel that is newe,
For like the mone waxen ye and wane:
Ay ful of clapping, dere ynough a jane,
Your dome is fals, your constance evil preveth,
A ful gret fool is he that on you leveth!

Thus saiden sade folk in that citee
Whan that the peple gased up and doun,
For they were glad right for the noveltee
To have a newe lady of hir toun.
No more of this make I now mentioun,
But to Grisilde agen I wol me dresse,
And telle hire constance and hire besinesse.

Ful besy was Grisilde in every thing
That to the feste was appertinent;
Right naught was she abaist of hire clothing,
Though it were rude, and somdel eke to-rent,
But with glad chere to the yate is went,
With other folk, to grete the markisesse,
And after that doth forth hire besinesse.

With so glad chere his gestes she receiveth,
And conningly everich in his degree,
That no defaute no man apperceiveth,
But ay they wondren what she mighte be
That in so poure array was for to see
And coude swiche honour and reverence,
And worthily they preisen hire prudence.

In all this mene while ſhe ne ſtent
This maide and eke hire brother to commend
With all hire herte in ful benigne entent,
So wel that no man coud hire preiſe amend;
But at the laſt whan that thiſe lordes wend
To ſitten doun to mete, he gan to call
Griſilde, as ſhe was beſy in the hall.
Griſilde, (quod he, as it were in his play)
How liketh thee my wif and hire beautee?
Right wel, my Lord, quod ſhe, for in good fay
A fairer ſaw I never non than ſhe;
I pray to God yeve you proſperitee,
And ſo I hope that he wol to you ſend
Pleſance ynough unto your lives end.
O thing beſeche I you and warne alſo,
That ye ne prikke with no turmenting
This tendre maiden as ye han do mo,

ỽ. 8915. *as ye han do mo*] For *me*. This is one of the moſt licentious corruptions of orthography that I remember to have obſerved in Chaucer. All that can be ſaid in excuſe of him is, that the old poets of other countries have not been more ſcrupulous. Quadrio has a long chapter [*L.* ii. *Diſt.* iv. *cap.* iv.] upon the licenſes taken by the Italian poets, and eſpecially Dante, (the moſt licentious, as he ſays, of them all) for the ſake of rhyme. As long a chapter might eaſily be filled with the irregularities which the old French poets committed for the ſame reaſon. It ſhould ſeem that while orthography was ſo variable as it was in all the living European languages before the invention of printing, the poets thought it generally adviſeable to ſacrifice propriety of ſpelling to exactneſs of rhyming: of the former offence there were but few judges, the latter was obvious to the eye of every reader.

For ſhe is foſtred in hire noriſhing
More tendrely, and to my ſuppoſing
She mighte not adverſitee endure
As coude a poure foſtred creature.
  And whan this Walter ſaw hire patience,
Hire glade chere, and no malice at all,
And he ſo often hadde hire don offence,
And ſhe ay ſade and conſtant as a wall,
Continuing ever hire innocence over all,
This ſturdy markis gan his herte dreſſe
To rewe upon hire wiſly ſtedefaſtneſſe.
  This is ynough, Griſilde min, quod he,
Be now no more agaſt ne evil apaid,
I have thy faith and thy benignitee,
As wel as ever woman was, aſſaid
In gret eſtat and pourelich arraid:
Now know I, dere wif, thy ſtedefaſtneſſe;
And hire in armes toke, and gan to keſſe.
  And ſhe for wonder toke of it no kepe;
She herde not what thing he to hire ſaid;
She ferde as ſhe had ſtert out of a ſlepe,
Til ſhe out of hire maſedneſſe abraid.
Griſilde, quod he, by God that for us deid
Thou art my wif; non other I ne have
Ne never had, as God my ſoule ſave.
  This is thy doughter which thou haſt ſuppoſed
To be my wif; that other faithfully
Shal be min heir, as I have ay diſpoſed;

Thou bare hem of thy body trewely;
At Bologne have I kept hem prively:
Take hem agen, for now maiſt thou not ſay
That thou haſt lorn non of thy children tway.
And folk that otherwiſe han ſaid of me,
I warne hem wel that I have don this dede
For no malice ne for no crueltee,
But for to aſſay in thee thy womanhede,
And not to ſlee my children (God forbede)
But for to kepe hem prively and ſtill
Til I thy purpos knew and all thy will.
Whan ſhe this herd aſwoune doun ſhe falleth
For pitous joye; and after hire ſwouning
She both hiré yonge children to hire calleth,
And in hire armes, pitouſly weping,
Embraceth hem, and tendrely kiſſing
Ful like a moder, with hire ſalte teres
She bathed both hir viſage and hir heres.
O, which a pitous thing it was to ſee
Hire ſwouning, and hire humble vois to here!
Grand mercy! Lord, God thank it you (quod ſhe)
That ye han ſaved me my children dere:
Now rekke I never to be ded right here,
Sin I ſtond in your love and in your grace,
No force of deth, ne whan my ſpirit pace.
O tendre, o dere, o yonge, children mine!
Your woful mother wened ſtedfaſtly
That cruel houndes or ſom foul vermine

Had eten you; but God of his mercy
And your benigne fader tendrely
Hath don you kepe: and in that ſame ſtound
Al ſodenly ſhe ſwapt adoun to ground.
  And in hire ſwough ſo ſadly holdeth ſhe
Hire children two, whan ſhe gan hem embrace,
That with gret ſleight and gret difficultee
The children from hire arm they gan arrace.
O! many a tere on many a pitous face
Doun ran of hem that ſtoden hire beſide;
Unnethe abouten hire might they abide.
  Walter hire gladeth, and hire ſorwe ſlaketh;
She riſeth up abaſhed from hire trance,
And every wight hire joye and feſte maketh
Til ſhe hath caught agen hire contenance.
Walter hire doth ſo faithfully pleſance,
That it was deintee for to ſeen the chere
Betwix hem two ſin they ben met in fere.
  Thiſe ladies, whan that they hir time ſey,
Han taken hire, and into chambre gon,
And ſtripen hire out of hire rude arrey,
And in a cloth of gold that brighte ſhone,
With a coroune of many a riche ſtone
Upon hire hed, they into hall hire broughte,
And ther ſhe was honoured as hire ought.
  Thus hath this pitous day a bliſful end,
For every man and woman doth his might
This day in mirth and revel to diſpend.

Til on the welkin ſhone the ſterres bright;
For more ſolempne in every mannes ſight
This feſte was, and greter of coſtage,
Than was the revel of hire mariage.
Ful many a yere in high proſperitee
Liven thiſe two in concord and in reſt,
And richely his doughter maried he
Unto a lord, on of the worthieſt
Of all Itaille, and than in pees and reſt
His wives fader in his court he kepeth
Til that the ſoule out of his body crepeth.
His ſone ſuccedeth in his heritage,
In reſt and pees, after his fadres day,
And fortunat was eke in mariage,
Al put he not his wif in gret aſſay:
This world is not ſo ſtrong, it is no nay,
As it hath ben in olde times yore,
And herkneth what this auctour ſaith therfore.
This ſtory is ſaid, not for that wives ſhuld
Folwe Griſilde as in humilitee,
For it were importable tho they wold,
But for that every wight in his degree
Shulde be conſtant in adverſitee
As was Griſilde, therfore Petrark writeth
This ſtorie, which with high ſtile he enditeth.
For ſith a woman was ſo patient
Unto a mortal man, wel more we ought
Receiven all in gree that God us ſent.

For gret ſkill is he preve that he wrought;
But he ne tempteth no man that he bought,
As ſaith Seint Jame, if ye his piſtell rede;
He preveth folk al day, it is no drede;
And ſuffreth us, as for our exerciſe,
With ſharpe ſcourges of adverſitee
Ful often to be bete in ſondry wiſe,
Not for to know our will, for certes he
Or we were borne knew all our freeletee,
And for our beſt is all his governance;
Let us than live in vertuous ſuffrance.
But o word, Lordings, herkneth or I go:
It were ful hard to finden now adayes
In all a toun Griſildes three or two;
For if that they were put to ſwiche aſſayes
The gold of hem hath now ſo bad alayes
With bras, that though the coine be faire at eye
It wolde rather braſt atwo than plie.
For which here, for the Wives love of Bathe,
Whos lif and al hire ſecte God maintene
In high maiſtrie, and elles were it ſcathe,
I wol with luſty herte freſhe and grene
Say you a ſong to gladen you I wene,
And let us ſtint of erneſtful matere.
Herkneth my ſong, that ſaith in this manere:
Griſilde is ded, and eke hire patience,
And both at ones buried in Itaille,
For which I crie in open audience,

No wedded man fo hardy be to affaille
His wives patience, in truft to find
Grifildes, for in certain he fhal faille.
O noble wives! ful of high prudence,
Let non humilitee your tonges naile,
Ne let no clerk have caufe or diligence
To write of you a ftorie of fwiche mervaille
As of Grifildis, patient and kinde,
Left Chichevache you fwalwe in hire entraille.
Folweth Ecco, that holdeth no filence,
But ever anfwereth at the countretaille:
Beth not bedaffed for your innocence,
But fharply taketh on you the governaille:
Emprenteth wel this leffon in your minde
For comun profit, fith it may availle.
Ye archewives! ftondeth ay at defence,
Sin ye be ftrong as is a gret camaille,
Ne fuffreth not that men do you offence.

v. 9064. *Left Chichevache*] This excellent reading is reftored upon the authority of the beft mff. inftead of the common one, *Chechiface*. The allufion is to the fubject of an old ballad, which is ftill preferved in mf. *Harl.* 2251, fol. 270, b. It is a kind of pageant, in which two beafts are introduced called *Bycorne* and *Chichevache*. The firft is fuppofed to feed upon obedient hufbands, and the other upon patient wives; and the humour of the piece confifts in reprefenting Bycorne as pampered with a fuperfluity of food, and Chichevache as half ftarved.——In Stowe's Catalogue of Lydgate's works, at the end of Speght's edit. of Chaucer, there is one entitled "Of two monftrous beafts, "*Bycorne* and *Chichefache*." It is not improbable that Lydgate tranflated the ballad now extant from fome older French poem to which Chaucer alludes. The name of *Chichevache* is French, *vacca parca*.

And sclendre wives, feble as in bataille,
Beth egre as is a tigre yond in Inde;
Ay clappeth as a mill I you counsaille.
  Ne drede hem not, doth hem no reverence,
For though thin husbond armed be in maille
The arwes of thy crabbed eloquence
Shal perce his brest and eke his aventaille:
In jalousie I rede eke thou him binde,
And thou shalt make him couche as doth a quaille.
  If thou be faire, ther folk ben in presence
Shew thou thy visage and thin aparaille;
If thou be foule be free of thy dispence;
To get thee frendes ay do thy travaille:
Be ay of chere as light as lefe on linde,
And let him care, and wepe, and wringe, and waille.

ỽ. 9080. *aventaille*] The forepart of the armour, *Sk.* He deduces it from *avant.* But *ventaille* was the common name for that aperture in a close helmet through which the wearer was to breathe, [*Nicot.* in v.] so that perhaps *aventaille* meant originally an helmet with such an aperture; *un heaume à ventaille.*

ỽ. 9088. *and wringe, and waille*] Beside the mss. C. 1. *Ask.* 1, 2, and others, we have the authority of both Caxton's editt. for concluding The Clerkes Tale in this manner. I say nothing of the two editt. by Pynson, as they are mere copies of Caxton's second: but I must not conceal a circumstance which seems to contradict the supposition that The Marchant's Prologue followed immediately. In those same mss. the following stanza is interposed;

This worthy Clerk, whan ended was his Tale,
Oure Hoste saide and swore by cockes bones,
Me were lever than a barrel of ale
My wif at home had herd this legend ones:
This is a gentil Tale for the nones,
As to my purpos, wiste ye my wille;
But thing that wol not be let it be stille.

THE MARCHANTES PROLOGUE.

WEPING and wailing, care, and other ſorwe,
I have ynough on even and on morwe,
Quod the Marchant, and ſo have other mo
That wedded ben; I trowe that it be ſo,
For wel I wot it fareth ſo by me.
I have a wif the werſte that may be,
For though the fend to hire ycoupled were
She wolde him overmatche I dare wel ſwere.
What ſhulde I you reherſe in ſpecial
Hire high malice? ſhe is a ſhrew at al.

Whatever may be thought of the genuineneſs of theſe lines they can at beſt, in my opinion, be conſidered as a fragment of an unfiniſhed prologue which Chaucer might once have intended to place at the end of The Clerkes Tale. When he determined to connect that Tale with The Marchant's in another manner, he may be ſuppoſed, notwithſtanding, to have left this ſtanza for the preſent uncancelled in his mſ. He has made uſe of the thought, and ſome of the lines, in the Prologue which connects The Monkes Tale with Melibee, ver. 13895—13900---The two additional ſtanzas, which were firſt printed in ed. *Urr.* from mſ. *F.* [*H.* 1, in *Urry's* liſt,] and which ſerve to introduce The Frankelein's Tale next to The Clerkes, are evidently, I think, ſpurious. They are not found, as I recollect, in any mſ. except that cited by Mr. Urry, and mſ. *B.* If theſe two mſſ. were of much greater age and authority than they really are they would weigh but little in oppoſition to the number and character of thoſe mſſ. in which theſe ſtanzas are wanting, and in which The Marchant's Tale ſtands next to The Clerkes.---Another proof of the ſpuriouſneſs of theſe ſtanzas is, that they are almoſt entirely made up of lines taken from the Prologue which, in this edition, upon the authority of the beſt mſſ. is prefixed to The Squieres Tale. See below, ver. 10301.

Ther is a long and a large difference
Betwix Griſildes grete patience
And of my wife the paſſing crueltee.
Were I unbounden, all ſo mote I the,
I wolde never eft comen in the ſnare.
We wedded men live in ſorwe and care:
Aſſay it who ſo wol, and he ſhal finde
That I ſay ſoth, by Seint Thomas of Inde,
As for the more part, I ſay not alle;
God ſhilde that it ſhulde ſo befalle.
A, good Sire Hoſte, I have ywedded be
Thiſe monethes two, and more not parde;
And yet I trowe that he that all his lif
Wifles hath ben, though that men wolde him rife
Into the herte, ne coude in no manere
Tellen ſo much ſorwe as I you here
Coud tellen of my wives curſedneſſe.
Now, quod our Hoſte, Marchant, ſo God you bleſſe,
Sin ye ſo mochel knowen of that art
Ful hertely I pray you tell us part.
Gladly, quod he, but of min owen ſore,
For ſory herte I tellen may no more.

THE MARCHANTES TALE.

Whilom ther was dwelling in Lumbardie
A worthy knight, that born was at Pavie,

The Marchantes Tale] Old January marrieth young May, and for his unequal match receiveth a foul reward. *Urry.*

In which he lived in gret proſperitee;
And ſixty yere a wifles man was he,
And folwed ay his bodily delit
On women ther as was his appetit,
As don thiſe fooles that ben ſeculere.
And whan that he was paſſed ſixty yere,
Were it for holineſſe or for dotage
I cannot ſain, but ſwiche a gret corage
Hadde this knight to ben a wedded man,
That day and night he doth all that he can
To eſpien wher that he might wedded be,
Praying our Lord to granten him that he
Mighte ones knowen of that bliſful lif
That is betwix an huſbond and his wif,
And for to live under that holy bond
With which God firſte man and woman bond.
Non other lif (ſaid he) is worth a bene;
For wedlok is ſo eſy and ſo clene
That in this world it is a paradiſe.
Thus ſaith this olde knight that was ſo wiſe.
  And certainly, as ſoth as God is king,
To take a wif it is a glorious thing,
And namely whan a man is old and hore,
Than is a wif the fruit of his treſore;
Than ſhuld he take a yong wif and a faire,
On which he might engendren him an heire,
And lede his lif in joye and in ſolas,
Wheras thiſe bachelers ſingen alas!

Whan that they finde any adverſitee
In love, which n'is but childiſh vanitee.
And trewely it ſit wel to be ſo
That bachelers have often peine and wo:
On brotel ground they bilde, and brotelneſſe
They finden whan they wenen ſikerneſſe:
They live but as a bird or as a beſte,
In libertee and under non areſte,
Ther as a wedded man in his eſtat
Liveth a lif bliſful and ordinat,
Under the yoke of mariage ybound;
Wel may his herte in joye and bliſſe abound:
For who can be ſo buxom as a wif?
Who is ſo trewe and eke ſo ententif
To kepe him, ſike and hole, as is his make?
For wele or wo ſhe n'ill him not forſake;
She n'is not wery him to love and ſerve
Though that he lie bedrede til that he ſterve.
  And yet ſom clerkes ſain it is not ſo,
Of which he Theophraſt is on of tho.
What force though Theophraſt liſt for to lie?
  Ne take no wif, quod he, for huſbondrie,

ỽ. 9172. *Ne take no wif*] What follows, to ver. 9180 incl. is taken from the *Liber aureolus Theophraſti de nuptiis*, as quoted by Hieronymus *contra Jovinianum*, and from thence by John of Saliſbury, *Polycrat.* l. viii. c. xi.; "Quod ſi propter diſpen-"ſationem domus, et languoris ſolatia, et fugam ſolitudinis, "ducuntur uxores, multo melius dſpenſat ſervus fidelis, &c. "Aſſidere autem ægrotanti magis poſſunt amici et vernulæ

As for to ſpare in houſhold thy diſpence:
A trewe ſervant doth more diligence
Thy good to kepe than doth thin owen wif,
For ſhe wol claimen half part al hire lif.
And if that thou be ſike, ſo God me ſave,
Thy veray frendes or a trewe knave
Wol kepe thee bet than ſhe, that waiteth ay
After thy good, and hath don many a day.
This ſentence, and an hundred thinges werſe,
Writeth this man, ther God his bones curſe.
But take no kepe of al ſwiche vanitee;
Defieth Theophraſt, and herkeneth me.

" beneficiis obligati quam illa, quæ nobis imputet lacrymas " ſuas," &c.

℣. 9180. *many a day*] After this verſe, in the common editt. are theſe two;

> And if thou take to thee a wife untrew
> Full oftentime it ſhall thee ſore rew.

In mſſ. *A. C.* and *B. α.* they ſtand thus—

> And if thou take a wif be wel ywar
> Of on peril / thing whiche I declare ne dar.

In mſſ. *C.* 1, *H.A. D.* thus——

> And if thou take a wif of heye lynage
> She ſhal be hauteyn and of gret coſtage.

In mſ. *B. δ.* thus ——

> And if thou take a wif in thin age olde
> Ful lightly mayſt thou be a cokewold.

In mſſ. *Aſk.* 1, 2, *E. H. B.* 6. *N.* c. and both Caxton's editt. they are entirely omitted, and ſo I believe they ſhould be. If any one of thoſe couplets ſhould be allowed to be from the hand of Chaucer, it can only be conſidered as the opening of a new argument, which the Author for ſome reaſon or other immediately abandoned, and conſequently would have cancelled if he had lived to publiſh his Work.

A wif is Goddes yefte veraily;
All other maner yeftes hardely,
As londes, rentes, paſture, or commune,
Or mebles, all ben yeftes of Fortune,
That paſſen as a ſhadow on the wall:
But drede thou not if plainly ſpeke I ſhal;
A wif wol laſt and in thin hous endure
Wel lenger than thee liſt paraventure.
Mariage is a ful gret ſacrament;
He which that hath no wif I hold him ſhent;
He liveth helples and all deſolat:
(I ſpeke of folk in ſeculer eſtat)
And herkneth why, I ſay not this for nought,
That woman is for mannes helpe ywrought:
The highe God, whan he had Adam maked,
And ſaw him al alone belly naked,
God of his grete goodneſſe ſaide than,
Let us now make an helpe unto this man
Like to himſelf, and than he made him Eve.
Here may ye ſee, and hereby may ye preve,
That a wif is mannes helpe and his comfort,
His paradis terreſtre, and his diſport:
So buxom and ſo vertuous is ſhe,
They moſten nedes live in unitee:
O fleſh they ben, and o fleſh, as I geſſe,
Hath but on herte in wele and in diſtreſſe.
A wif? a! Seinte Marie, *benedicite!*
How might a man have any adverſite

That hath a wif? certes I cannot feye.
The blisse the which that is betwix hem tweye
Ther may no tonge telle or herte thinke.
If he be poure she helpeth him to swinke;
She kepeth his good, and wasteth never a del;
All that hire husbond doth hire liketh wel:
She saith not ones Nay whan he saith Ye:
Do this, saith he; Al redy, Sire, saith she.
  O blisful ordre, o wedlok precious!
Thou art so mery and eke so vertuous,
And so commended and approved eke,
That every man that holt him worth a leke
Upon his bare knees ought all his lif
Thanken his God that him hath sent a wif,
Or elles pray to God him for to send
A wif to last unto his lives end;
For than his lif is set in sikernesse,
He may not be deceived, as I gesse,
So that he werche after his wives rede;
Than may he boldly beren up his hede,
They ben so trewe, and therwithal so wise;
For which, if thou wilt werchen as the wise,
Do alway so as women wol thee rede.
  Lo how that Jacob, as thise clerkes rede,
By good conseil of his mother Rebekke
Bounde the kiddes skin about his nekke,

℣. 9236. *Lo how that Jacob*] The same instances are quoted in Melibeus.

For which his fadres benison he wan.
Lo Judith, as the storie eke tell can,
By good conseil she Goddes peple kept,
And slow him Holofernes while he slept.
Lo Abigail, by good conseil how she
Saved hire husbond Nabal, whan that he
Shuld han be slain. And loke, Hester also
By good conseil delivered out of wo
The peple of God, and made him Mardochee
Of Assuere enhaunsed for to be.
Ther n'is no thing in gree superlatif
(As saith Senek) above an humble wif.
Suffer thy wives tonge, as Caton bit;
She shal command and thou shalt suffren it,
And yet she wol obey of curtesie.
A wif is keper of thin husbondrie:
Wel may the sike man bewaile and wepe
Ther as ther is no wif the hous to kepe.
I warne thee, if wisely thou wilt werche,
Love wel thy wif as Crist loveth his cherche:
If thou lovest thyself love thou thy wif.
No man hateth his flesh, but in his lif

ỽ. 9250. *(As saith Senek)*] In marg. *C.* 1; "Sicut nihil est "superius benignâ conjuge, ita nihil est crudelius infesta mu- "liere." *Seneca.*

ỽ. 9251. *as Caton bit*] *i. e.* biddeth. See the n. on ver. 187. The line referred to is quoted in marg. *C.* 1;

Uxoris linguam, si frugi est, ferre memento.

It is in *L.* iii. *Dist.* 25.

ỽ. 9259. *If thou lovest thyself*] The allusion is to *Ephes.* v. 28. *He that loveth his wife loveth himself.* The mss. read—If thou lovest thyself *thou lovest* thy wif—which I think is cer-

He foſtreth it, and therfore bid I thee
Cheriſh thy wif, or thou ſhalt never the.
Huſbond and wif, what ſo men jape or play,
Of worldly folk holden the ſiker way:
They ben ſo knit ther may non harm betide,
And namely upon the wives ſide.
  For which this January, of whom I told,
Conſidered hath within his dayes old
The luſty lif, the vertuous quiete,
That is in mariage honey-ſwete,
And for his frendes on a day he ſent
To tellen hem th' effect of his entent.
  With face ſad his tale he hath hem told:
He ſayde, Frendes, I am hore and old,
And almoſt (God wot) on my pittes brinke,
Upon my ſoule ſomwhat moſt I thinke.
I have my body folily diſpended,
Bleſſed be God that it ſhal ben amended!
For I wol ben certain a wedded man,
And that anon in all the haſt I can.
Unto ſom maiden, faire and tendre of age,
I pray you ſhapeth for my mariage
All ſodenly, for I wol not abide;
And I wol fonde to eſpien on my ſide
To whom I may be wedded haſtily.
But for as moche as ye ben more than I

tainly wrong. I have printed, from conjecture only—*love thou thy wif.* But upon reconſidering the paſſage I think it may be brought ſtill nearer to the apoſtle's doctrine by writing—Thou loveſt thyſelf *if* thou loveſt thy wif.

Ye ſhullen rather ſwiche a thing eſpien
Than I, and wher me beſte were to allien.
But o thing warn I you, my frendes dere,
I wol non old wif han in no manere;
She ſhal not paſſen twenty yere certain:
Old fiſh and yonge fleſh wold I have fain.
Bet is (quod he) a pike than a pikerel,
And bet than old beef is the tendre veel.
I wol no woman thirty yere of age;
It is but beneſtraw and gret forage.
And eke thiſe olde widewes (God it wote)
They connen ſo moch craft on Wades bote,
So mochel broken harm whan that hem leſt,
That with hem ſhuld I never live in reſt.
For ſondry ſcoles maken ſubtil clerkes;
Woman of many ſcoles half a clerk is.
But certainly a yong thing men may gie,
Right as men may warm wax with handes plie;

ỽ. 9298. *Wades bote*] Upon this Mr. Speght remarks as follows; "Concerning *Wade* and his *bote*, called Guingelot, as "alſo his ſtraunge exploits in the ſame, becauſe the matter is "long and fabulous I paſſe it over."——*Tantamne rem tam negligenter?* Mr. Speght probably did not foreſee that poſterity would be as much obliged to him for a little of this fabulous matter concerning *Wade* and his *bote* as for the graveſt of his annotations. The ſtory of *Wade* is mentioned again by our Author in his *Troilus*, iii. 615;

He ſonge, ſhe playde, he tolde *a tale of Wade*.

It is there put proverbially for any romantick hiſtory; but the alluſion in the preſent paſſage to *Wades bote* can hardly be explained without a more particular knowledge of his adventures than we are now likely ever to attain.

Wherfore I ſay you plainly in a clauſe
I wol non old wif han right for this cauſe.
For if ſo were I hadde ſwiche meſchance,
That I in hire ne coude have no pleſance,
Than ſhuld I lede my lif in avoutrie,
And ſo ſtreight to the devil whan I die.
Ne children ſhuld I non upon hire geten;
Yet were me lever houndes had me eten
Than that min heritage ſhulde fall
In ſtraunge hondes; and this I tell you all.
I dote not, I wot the cauſe why
Men ſhulden wedde; and furthermore wot I
Ther ſpeketh many a man of mariage
That wot no more of it than wot my page
For which cauſes a man ſhuld take a wif.
If he ne may not liven chaſt his lif,
Take him a wif with gret devotion,
Becauſe of leful procreation
Of children, to the honour of God above,
And not only for paramour or love,
And for they ſhulden lecherie eſchue,
And yeld hir dette whan that it is due,
Or for that eche of hem ſhuld helpen other
In meſchefe, as a ſuſter ſhal the brother,
And live in chaſtitee ful holily.
But, Sires, (by your leve) that am not I,
For, God be thanked, I dare make avaunt
I fele my limmes ſtark and ſuffiſant

To don all that a man belongeth to:
I wot myſelven beſt what I may do.
Though I be hoor I fare as doth a tre
That bloſmeth er the fruit ywoxen be;
The bloſmy tre n'is neither drie ne ded:
I fele me no wher hoor but on my hed:
Min herte and all my limmes ben as grene
As laurer thurgh the yere is for to ſene.
And ſin that ye han herd all min entent
I pray you to my will ye wolde aſſent.
Diverſe men diverſely him told
Of mariage many enſamples old;
Som blamed it, ſom praiſed it certain:
But atte laſte, ſhortly for to ſain,
(As all day falleth altercation
Betwixen frendes in diſputiſon)
Ther fell a ſtrif betwix his brethren two,
Of which that on was cleped Placebo,
Juſtinus ſothly called was that other.
Placebo ſayd, O January! brother,
Ful litel nede han ye, my lord ſo dere,
Conſeil to aſke of any that is here,
But that ye ben ſo ful of ſapience
That you ne liketh for your high prudence

V. 9348. *diſputiſon*)] Diſputation; ſo ver. 11202, 15244. See *Gower, Conf. Amant.* fol. 15. b.;

In great *deſputeſon* they were.

and fol. 150, b. 151, b.

To weiven fro the word of Salomon;
This word ſayd he unto us everich on,
Werke alle thing by conſeil, thus ſayd he,
And than ne ſhalt thou not repenten thee.
But though that Salomon ſpake ſwiche a word,
Min owen dere brother and my lord,
So wiſly God my ſoule bringe at reſt,
I hold your owen conſeil is the beſt.
  For, brother min, take of me this motif,
I have now ben a court-man all my lif,
And God it wot, though I unworthy be,
I have ſtonden in ful gret degree
Abouten lordes of ful high eſtat,
Yet had I never with non of hem debat;
I never hem contraried trewely.
I wot wel that my lord can more than I;
What that he ſaith I holde it firme and ſtable;
I ſay the ſame, or elles thing ſemblable.
A ful gret fool is any conſeillour,
That ſerveth any lord of high honour,
That dare preſume, or ones thinken it,
That his conſeil ſhuld paſſe his lordes wit:
Nay, lordes be no fooles by my fay.
Ye han yourſelven ſhewed here to-day
So high ſentence, ſo holily, and wel,
That I conſent, and confirme every del
Your wordes all, and your opinioun.
By God ther n'is no man in all this toun,

Ne in Itaille, coud bet han yſayd:
Criſt holt him of this conſeil wel appaid.
And trewely it is an high corage
Of any man that ſtopen is in age
To take a young wif: by my fader kin
Your herte hongeth on a joly pin.
  Doth now in this matere right as you leſt,
For finally I hold it for the beſt.
  Juſtinus, that ay ſtille ſat and herd,
Right in this wiſe he to Placebo anſwerd:
Now, brother min, be patient I pray,
Sin ye han ſaid, and herkneth what I ſay.
  Senek, among his other wordes wiſe,
Saith that a man ought him right wel aviſe
To whom he yeveth his lond or his catel:
And ſith I ought aviſen me right wel
To whom I yeve my good away fro me,
Wel more I ought aviſen me, parde,
To whom I yeve my body; for alway
I warne you wel it is no childes play
To take a wif without aviſement.
Men muſt enqueren (this is min aſſent)
Wheder ſhe be wiſe and ſobre or dronkelewe,
Or proud, or elles other waies a ſhrew,
A chideſter, or a waſtour of thy good,
Or riche or poure, or elles a man is wood:

℣. 9409. *a chideſter*] So mſ. *A.* See the note on ver. 2019.
℣. 9410. *a man is wood*] In mſ. *A. manniſhewed;* in *C.* 1; *manniſh wood.*

Al be it ſo that no man finden ſhal
Non in this world that trotteth hol in al,
Ne man ne beſte, ſwiche as men can deviſe,
But natheles it ought ynough ſuffice
With any wif, if ſo were that ſhe had
Mo goode thewes than hire vices bad:
And all this axeth leiſer to enquere;
For God it wot I have wept many a tere
Ful prively ſin that I had a wif.
Praiſe who ſo wol a wedded mannes lif,
Certain I find in it but coſt and care,
And obſervances of alle bliſſes bare;
And yet, God wot, my neighebours aboute,
And namely of women many a route,
Sain that I have the moſte ſtedefaſt wif,
And eke the mekeſt on, that bereth lif:
But I wot beſt wher wringeth me my ſho.
Ye may for me right as you liketh do.
Aviſeth you, ye ben a man of age,
How that ye entren into mariage,
And namely with a yong wif and a faire.
By him that made water, fire, erthe, and aire,
The yongeſt man that is in all this route
Is beſy ynow to bringen it aboute
To han his wif alone, truſteth me:
Ye ſhul not pleſen hire fully yeres three,
This is to ſain, to don hire ful pleſance:
A wif axeth ful many an obſervance.

I pray you that ye be not evil appaid.
Wel, quod this January, and haſt thou ſaide?
Straw for Senek, and ſtraw for thy proverbes;
I counte not a panier ful of herbes
Of ſcole termes: wiſer men than thou,
As thou haſt herd, aſſented here right now
To my purpos. Placebo, what ſaye ye?
I ſay it is a curſed man, quod he,
That letteth matrimoine ſikerly.
And with that word they riſen ſodenly,
And ben aſſented fully that he ſholde
Be wedded whan him liſt and wher he wolde.
High fantaſie and curious beſineſſe
Fro day to day gan in the ſoule empreſſe
Of January about his mariage:
Many a faire ſhap and many a faire viſage
Ther paſſeth thurgh his herte night by night.
As who ſo toke a mirrour poliſhed bright,
And ſet it in a comune market place,
Then ſhuld he ſee many a figure pace
By his mirrour, and in the ſame wiſe
Gan January in with his thought deviſe
Of maidens which that dwelten him beſide;
He wiſte not wher that he might abide;
For if that on have beautee in hire face,
Another ſtont ſo in the peples grace,
For hire ſadneſſe and hire benignitee,
That of the peple the greteſt vois hath ſhe:

And ſom were riche and hadden a bad name;
But natheles, betwix erneſt and game,
He at the laſt appointed him on on,
And let all other from his herte gon,
And chees hire of his owen auctoritee,
For love is blind all day and may not ſee.
And whan that he was in his bed ybrought
He purtreied in his herte and in his thought
Hire freſhe beautee and hire age tendre,
Hire middel ſmal, hire armes long and ſclendre,
Hire wiſe governance, hire gentilleſſe,
Hire womanly bering, and hire ſadneſſe.
  And whan that he on hire was condeſcended
Him thought his chois it might not ben amended;
For whan that he himſelf concluded had
Him thought eche other mannes wit ſo bad
That impoſſible it were to replie
Again his chois: this was his fantaſie.
  His frendes ſent he to, at his inſtance,
And praied hem to don him that pleſance
That haſtily they wolden to him come;
He wolde abregge hir labour all and ſome:
Neded no more to hem to go ne ride,
He was appointed ther he wolde abide.
  Placebo came, and eke his frendes ſone,
And alderfirſt he bade hem all a bone,
That non of hem non argumentes make
Again the purpos that he hath ytake;

Which purpos was pleſant to God (ſaid he)
And veray ground of his proſperitee.
He ſaid ther was a maiden in the toun
Which that of beautee hadde gret renoun,
Al were it ſo ſhe were of ſmal degree;
Sufficeth him hire youth and hire beautee;
Which maid (he ſaid) he wold han to his wif,
To lede in eſe and holineſſe his life;
And thanked God that he might han hire all,
That no wight with his bliſſe parten ſhall;
And praied hem to labour in this nede,
And ſhapen that he faille not to ſpede:
For than, he ſayd, his ſpirit was at eſe;
Than is (quod he) nothing may me diſpleſe,
Save o thing pricketh in my conſcience,
The which I wol reherſe in your preſence.
I have (quod he) herd ſaid ful yore ago
Ther may no man han parfite bliſſes two,
This is to ſay, in erthe and eke in heven;
For though he kepe him fro the ſinnes ſeven,
And eke from every branch of thilke tree,
Yet is ther ſo parfit felicitee,
And ſo gret eſe and luſt, in mariage,
That ever I am agaſt, now in min age,
That I ſhal leden now ſo mery a lif,
So delicat, withouten wo or ſtrif,
That I ſhal han min heven in erthe here;
For ſin that veray heven is bought ſo dere,

With tribulation and gret penance,
How ſhuld I than, living in ſwiche pleſance
As alle wedded men don with hir wives,
Come to the bliſſe ther Criſt eterne on live is?
This is my drede, and ye, my brethren tweie,
Aſſoileth me this queſtion I preie.
  Juſtinus, which that hated his folie,
Anſwerd anon right in his japerie,
And for he wold his longe tale abrege
He wolde non auctoritee allege,
But ſayde, Sire, ſo ther be non obſtacle
Other than this, God of his hie miracle,
And of his mercy, may ſo for you werche,
That er ye have your rights of holy cherche
Ye may repent of wedded mannes lif,
In which ye ſain ther is no wo ne ſtrif;
And elles God forbede but if he ſent
A wedded man his grace him to repent
Wel often, rather than a ſingle man:
And therfore, Sire, the beſt rede that I can,
Deſpeire you not, but haveth in memorie
Paraventure ſhe may be your Purgatorie;
She may be Goddes mene and Goddes whippe,
Than ſhal your ſoule up unto heven ſkippe
Swifter than doth an arow of a bow.
I hope to God hereafter ye ſhal know
That ther n'is non ſo gret felicitee
In mariage, ne never more ſhall be,

That you ſhal let of your ſalvation,
So that ye uſe, as ſkill is and reſon,
The luſtes of your wif attemprely,
And that ye pleſe hire nat to amorouſly,
And that ye kepe you eke from other ſinne.
My Tale is don, for my wit is but thinne.
Beth not agaſt hereof, my brother dere,
But let us waden out of this matere.
The Wif of Bathe, if ye han underſtond,
Of mariage, which ye now han in hond,
Declared hath ful wel in litel ſpace.
Fareth now wel, God have you in his grace!
  And with this word this Juſtine and his brother
Han take hir leve, and eche of hem of other.
And whan they ſaw that it muſt nedes be,
They wroughten ſo by ſleighte and wiſe tretee
That ſhe this maiden, which that Maius hight,
As haſtily as ever that ſhe might,
Shal wedded be unto this January.
I trow it were to longe you to tary
If I you told of every ſcript and bond
By which that ſhe was feoffed in his lond,
Or for to rekken of hire rich array.
But, finally, ycomen is the day
That to the chirche bothe ben they went
For to receive the holy ſacrament.
Forth cometh the preeſt, with ſtole about his nekke,
And bade hire be like Sara and Rebekke

In wiſdome and in trouthe of mariage;
And ſayd his oriſons, as is uſage,
And crouched hem, and bade God ſhuld hem bleſſe,
And made all ſiker ynow with holineſſe.
  Thus ben they wedded with ſolempnitee;
And at the feſte ſitteth he and ſhe,
With other worthy folk, upon the deis.
Al ful of joye and bliſſe is the paleis,
And ful of inſtruments, and of vitaille
The moſte deinteous of all Itaille.
Beforn hem ſtood ſwiche inſtruments of ſoun
That Orpheus, ne of Thebes Amphion,
Ne maden never ſwiche a melodie:
At every cours in came loude minſtralcie,
That never Joab tromped for to here,
Ne he Theodomas yet half ſo clere
At Thebes whan the citee was in doute.
Bacchus the win hem ſkinketh all aboute,
And Venus laugheth upon every wight,
(For January was become hire knight,
And wolde both aſſaien his corage
In libertee and eke in mariage)

℣. 9594. *Ne he Theodomas*] This perſon is mentioned again as a famous trumpeter in the *H.* of *F.* iii. 156, but upon what authority I really do not know. I ſhould ſuſpect that our Author met with him and the anecdote alluded to in ſome romantick hiſtory of Thebes.----*He* is prefixed to proper names emphatically, according to the Saxon uſage. See before, ver. 9242, *him* Holofernes; ver. 9247, *him* Mardochee; and below, ver. 9608;

Of *hire* Philologie and *him* Mercurie.

And with hire firebrond in hire hond aboute
Danceth before the bride and all the route.
And certainly I dare right wel ſay this,
Ymeneus, that god of Wedding is,
Saw never his lif ſo mery a wedded man.
  Hold thou thy pees, thou poet Marcian,
That writeſt us that ilke wedding mery
Of hire Philologie and him Mercurie,
And of the ſonges that the Muſes ſonge;
To ſmal is both thy pen and eke thy tonge
For to deſcriven of this mariage.
Whan tendre Youth hath wedded ſtouping Age
Ther is ſwiche mirth that it may not be writen:
Aſſaieth it yourſelf, than may ye witen
If that I lie or non in this matere.
  Maius, that ſit with ſo benigne a chere,
Hire to behold it ſemed Faerie.
Quene Heſter loked never with ſwiche an eye
On Aſſuere, ſo meke a look hath ſhe.
I may you not deviſe all hire beautee;
But this moch of hire beautee tell I may,
That ſhe was, like the brighte morwe of May,
Fulfilled of all beautee and pleſance.
  This January is raviſhed in a trance
At every time he loketh in hire face;
But in his herte he gan hire to manace
That he that night in armes wold hire ſtreine
Harder than ever Paris did Heleine.

But natheles yet had he gret pitee
That thilke night offenden hire muſt he,
And thought, alas! o tendre creature!
Now wolde God ye mighten wel endure
All my corage; it is ſo ſharpe and kene
I am agaſt ye ſhal it nat ſuſtene!
But God forbede that I did all my might!
Now wolde God that it were waxen night,
And that the night wold laſten ever mo!
I wold that all this peple were ago!
And, finally, he doth all his labour,
As he beſt mighte, ſaving his honour,
To heſte hem fro the mete in ſubtil wiſe.
  The time came that reſon was to riſe,
And after that men dance and drinken faſt,
And ſpices all about the hous they caſt,
And ful of joye and bliſſe is every man,
All but a ſquier that highte Damian,
Which carf beforn the knight ful many a day:
He was ſo raviſht on his Lady May,
That for the veray peine he was nie wood;
Almoſt he ſwelt, and ſwouned ther he ſtood:
So ſore hath Venus hurt him with hire brond
As that ſhe bare it dancing in hire hond;

ỽ. 9652. *As that ſhe bare it*] As this line is not only in all the beſt mſſ. but alſo in edit. *Ca.* 2, it ſeems very extraordinary that the later editions ſhould have exchanged it for the following;

So freſh ſhe was, and therto ſo licand.

And to his bed he went him haſtily:
No more of him as at this time ſpeke I,
But ther I let him wepe ynow and plaine
Til freſhe May wol rewen on his peine.
  O perilous fire that in the bedſtraw bredeth!
O famuler fo that his ſervice bedeth!
O ſervant traitour, falſe of holy hewe,
Like to the nedder in boſom ſlie untrewe,
God ſhelde us alle from your acquaintance!
O January! dronken in pleſance
Of mariage, ſee how thy Damian,
Thin owen ſquier and thy boren man,
Entendeth for to do thee vilanie:
God grante thee thin homly fo to eſpie,
For in this world n'is werſe peſtilence
Than homly fo all day in thy preſence.
  Parformed hath the ſonne his arke diurne,
No longer may the body of him ſojourne
On the oriſont, as in that latitude;
Night, with his mantel that is derke and rude,
Gan overſprede the hemiſperie aboute,
For which departed is this luſty route

ṽ. 9658. *his ſervice bedeth*] Profſereth; ſo this word is explained in another paſſage, ver. 16533;

> Lo how this theſe coude *his ſervice bede!*
> Ful ſoth it is that *ſwiche profered ſervice*
> Stinketh, as witneſſen thiſe olde wiſe.

See alſo ver. 8236.

ṽ. 9659. *falſe of holy hewe*] I have added *of* from conjecture See below, ver. 12355, under hewe *of* holineſſe.

Fro January, with thank on every ſide.
Home to hir houſes luſtily they ride,
Ther as they don hir thinges as hem left,
And whan they ſaw hir time gon to reſt.
  Sone after that this haſtif January
Wol go to bed, he wol no longer tary.
He drinketh Ipocras, clarre, and Vernage,
Of ſpices hot, to encreſen his corage;
And many a letuarie had he ful fine,
Swiche as the curſed monk Dan Conſtantine
Hath written in his book *De Coitu*;
To ete hem all he wolde nothing eſchue:
And to his privee frendes thus ſayd he:
  For Goddes love, as ſone as it may be,

v. 9681. *Vernage*] *Vernaccia*, Ital. "Credo ſic dictum (ſays "Skinner) quaſi *Veronaccia*, ab agro *Veronenſi*, in quo optimum ex hoc genere vinum creſcit." But the *Vernage* (whatever may have been the reaſon of its name) was probably a wine of Crete, or of the neighbouring continent. *Froiſſart*, v. iv. c. 18; "De l'iſle de Candie il leur venoit treſbonnes *Malvoiſies* et grenaches [r. *garnaches*] dont ils eſtoient largement ſervis et confortez." Our Author in another place, ver. 13000, 1, joins together the wines of Malveſie and *Vernage*. Malvaſia was a town upon the eaſtern coaſt of the Morea, near the ſite of the ancient Epidaurus Limera, within a ſmall diſtance from Crete.

v. 9684. *Dan Conſtantine*] *Dan* (a corruption of *Dominus*) was a title of honour uſually given to monks, as *Dom* and *Don* ſtill are in France and Spain. See below ver. 13935;

Whether ſhal I call you my Lord *Dan* John,
Or *Dan* Thomas, or elles *Dan* Albon?

Dan Conſtantine, according to *Fabric. Bibl. Med. Æt.* t. i. p. 423, wrote about the year 1080. His works, including the treatiſe mentioned in the text, were printed at Baſil 1536, fol.

Let voiden all this hous in curteis wiſe.
And they han don right as he wol deviſe.
Men drinken, and the travers drawe anon;
The bride is brought a-bed as ſtill as ſton;
And whan the bed was with the preeſt ybleſſed
Out of the chambre hath every wight him dreſſed,
And January hath faſt in armes take
His freſhe May, his paradis, his make.
He lulleth hire, he kiſſeth hire ful oft;
With thicke briſtles of his berd unſoft,
Like to the ſkin of houndfiſh, ſharp as brere,
(For he was ſhave al newe in his manere)
He rubbeth hire upon hire tendre face,
And ſayde thus; Alas! I mote treſpace
To you my ſpouſe, and you gretly offend,
Or time come that I wol doun deſcend:
But natheles conſidereth this, (quod he)
Ther n'is no werkman, whatſoever he be,
That may both werken wel and haſtily:
This wol be don at leiſer parfitly.
It is no force how longe that we play;
In trewe wedlock coupled be we tway;

ṽ. 9690. *And they han don*] This line has alſo been left out of the later editt. though it is in all the beſt mſſ. and in edit. *Ca.* 2. To ſupply its place the following line——

So haſted Januarie it muſt be don——

has been inſerted after ver. 9691, and the four lines have been made to rhyme together by adding *ſone* at the end of ver. 9689;

Let voiden all this hous in curteis wiſe *ſone*.

And bleſſed be the yoke that we ben inne,
For in our actes may ther be no ſinne.
A man may do no ſinne with his wif,
Ne hurt himſelven with his owen knif,
For we have leve to play us by the lawe.
  Thus laboureth he til that the day gan dawe,
And than he taketh a ſop in fine clarre,
And upright in his bed than ſitteth he,
And after that he ſang ful loud and clere,
And kiſt his wif, and maketh wanton chere.
He was al coltiſh, ful of ragerie,
And ful of jergon as a flecked pie.
The ſlacke ſkin about his necke ſhaketh
While that he ſang, ſo chanteth he and craketh.
But God wot what that May thought in hire herte
Whan ſhe him ſaw up ſitting in his ſherte
In his night cap, and with his necke lene:
She praiſeth not his playing worth a bene.
Than ſayd he thus; My reſte wol I take,
Now day is come, I may no lenger wake;
And doun he layd his hed and ſlept til prime.
And afterward, whan that he ſaw his time,
Up riſeth January, but freſhe May
Held hire in chambre til the fourthe day,
As uſage is of wives for the beſte;
For every labour ſomtime moſte han reſte,

℣ 9714. *Ne hurt himſelven*] In The Perſones Tale we have a contrary doctrine; "God wote a man may flee himſelf with "his owen knif, and make himſelf dronken of his owen tonne."

Or elles longe may he not endure;
This is to ſay, no lives creature,
Be it of fiſh, or brid, or beſt, or man.
  Now wol I ſpeke of woful Damian,
That langureth for love, as ye ſhul here,
Therfore I ſpeke to him in this manere.
I ſay, O ſely Damian, alas!
Anſwer to this demand as in this cas;
How ſhalt thou to thy lady freſhe May
Tellen thy wo? ſhe wol alway ſay nay;
Eke if thou ſpeke ſhe wol thy wo bewrein:
God be thin help! I can no better ſein.
  This ſike Damian in Venus fire
So brenneth that he dieth for deſire,
For which he put his lif in aventure,
No lenger might he in this wiſe endure,
But prively a penner gan he borwe,
And in a lettre wrote he all his ſorwe,
In manere of a complaint or a lay,
Unto his faire freſhe Lady May,
And in a purſe of ſilk heng on his ſherte
He hath it put, and layd it at his herte.
  The mone that at none was thilke day
That January hath wedded freſhe May
In ten of Taure was into Cancer gliden,
So long hath Maius in hire chambre abiden,

Ṽ. 9761. *In ten of Taure*] The greateſt number of mſſ. read *two*, *tuo*, *too*, or *to*. But the time given (*foure days complete*, ver. 9767,) is not ſufficient for the moon to paſs from the 2d

As cuftome is unto thife nobles alle.
A bride fhal not eten in the halle
Til dayes four, or three dayes at the lefte,
Ypaffed ben, than let hire go to fefte.
The fourthe day complete fro none to none,
Whan that the highe meffe was ydone,
In halle fat this January and May
As frefh as is the brighte fomers day;
And fo befel how that this goode man
Remembred him upon this Damian,
And fayde, Seinte Marie, how may it be
That Damian entendeth not to me?
Is he ay fike? or how may this betide?
His fquiers, which that ftoden ther befide,
Excufed him becaufe of his fikneffe,
Which letted him to don his befineffe;
Non other caufe mighte make him tary.
That me forthinketh, quod this January;
He is a gentil fquier by my trouthe,
If that he died it were gret harme and routhe:
He is as wife, difcret, and as fecree,
As any man I wote of his degree,
And therto manly and eke fervifable,
And for to ben a thrifty man right able.

degree of Taurus into Cancer. The mean daily motion of the moon being = 13. 10. 35. her motion in 4 days is = 1s. 22°. 42. or not quite 53 degrees; fo that fuppofing her to fet out from the 2d of Taurus, fhe would not, in that time, be advanced beyond the 25th degree of Gemini. If fhe fet out from the 10th degree of Taurus (as I have corrected the text) fhe might properly enough be faid, in four days, to be *gliden into* Cancer.

But after mete, as ſone as ever I may,
I wol myſelfe viſite him, and eke May,
To don him all the comfort that I can.
And for that word him bleſſed every man,
That of his bountee and his gentilleſſe
He wolde ſo comforten in ſikneſſe
His ſquier, for it was a gentil dede.
  Dame, quod this January, take good hede
At after mete ye with your women alle,
(Whan that ye ben in chambre out of this halle)
That all ye gon to ſee this Damian;
Doth him diſport, he is a gentil man,
And telleth him that I wol him viſite,
Have I no thing but reſted me a lite:
And ſpede you faſte, for I wol abide
Til that ye ſlepen faſte by my ſide.
And with that word he gan unto him calle
A ſquier that was marſhal of his halle,
And told him certain thinges that he wolde.
  This freſhe May hath ſtreight hire way yholde,
With all hire women, unto Damian:
Doun by his beddes ſide ſit ſhe than,
Comforting him as goodly as ſhe may.
  This Damian, whan that his time he ſay,
In ſecree wiſe his purſe and eke his bill,
In which that he ywritten had his will,
Hath put into hire hond withouten more,
Save that he ſiked wonder depe and ſore,

And ſoftely to hire right thus ſayd he;
Mercie, and that ye nat diſcover me,
For I am ded if that this thing be kid.
  This purſe hath ſhe in with hire boſome hid,
And went hire way: ye get no more of me:
But unto January ycome is ſhe,
That on his beddes ſide ſate ful ſoft.
He taketh hire and kiſſeth hire ful oft,
And layd him doun to ſlepe, and that anon.
She feined hire as that ſhe muſte gon
Ther as ye wote that every wight mot nede;
And whan ſhe of this bill hath taken hede
She rent it all to cloutes at the laſt,
And in the privee ſoftely it caſt.
  Who ſtudieth now but faire freſhe May?
Adoun by olde January ſhe lay,
That ſlepte til the cough hath him awaked.
Anon he prayd hire ſtripen hire al naked,
He wolde of hire, he ſaid, have ſom pleſance,
And ſaid hire clothes did him encombrance.
And ſhe obeieth him, be hire lefe or loth.
But leſt that precious folk be with me wroth,
How that he wrought I dare nat to you tell,
Or wheder hire thought it paradis or hell:
But ther I let hem werken in hir wiſe
Til eveſong rang, and that they muſt ariſe.
  Were it by deſtinee or aventure,
Were it by influence or by nature,

Or conſtellation, that in ſwiche eſtat
The heven ſtood at that time fortunat,
As for to put a bill of Venus werkes
(For alle thing hath time, as ſayn thiſe clerkes)
To any woman for to get hire love,
I cannot ſay, but grete God above,
That knoweth that non act is cauſeles,
He deme of all, for I wol hold my pees.
But ſoth is this, how that this freſhe May
Hath taken ſwiche impreſſion that day
Of pitee on this ſike Damian,
That fro hire herte ſhe ne driven can
The remembrance for to don him eſe.
Certain (thought ſhe) whom that this thing diſpleſe
I rekke not, for here I him aſſure
To love him beſt of any creature,
Though he no more hadde than his ſherte.
  Lo, pitee renneth ſone in gentil herte:
Here may ye ſeen how excellent franchiſe
In women is whan they hem narwe aviſe.
Som tyraunt is, as ther ben many on,
That hath an herte as hard as any ſton,
Which wold han lette him ſterven in the place
Wel rather than han granted him hire grace,
And hem rejoycen in hir cruel pride,
And rekken not to ben an homicide.
  This gentil May, fulfilled of pitee,
Right of hire hond a lettre maketh ſhe,

In which ſhe granteth him hire veray grace:
Ther lacked nought but only day and place
Wher that ſhe might unto his luſt ſuffice;
For it ſhal be right as he wol deviſe.
   And whan ſhe ſaw hire time upon a day
To viſiten this Damian goth this May,
And ſotilly this lettre doun ſhe threſt
Under his pilwe, rede it if him leſt.
She taketh him by the hond, and hard him twiſt,
So ſecretly that no wight of it wiſt,
And bade him ben all hol: and forth ſhe went
To January whan he for hire ſent.
   Up riſeth Damian the nexte morwe,
Al paſſed was his ſikneſſe and his ſorwe.
He kembeth him, he proineth him and piketh,
He doth all that his lady luſt and liketh;
And eke to January he goth as lowe
As ever did a dogge for the bowe.
He is ſo pleſant unto every man,
(For craft is all, who ſo that don it can)
That every wight is fain to ſpeke him good;
And fully in his ladies grace he ſtood.
   Thus let I Damian about his nede,
And in my Tale forth I wol procede.
   Som clerkes holden that felicitee
Stant in delit, and therfore certain he,

ỽ. 9888. *a dogge for the bowe*] A dog uſed in ſhooting. See before, ver. 6951.

This noble January, with all his might,
In honeſt wiſe as longeth to a knight,
Shope him to liven ful delicioufly.
His houſing, his array, as honeſtly
To his degree was maked as a kinges.
Amonges other of his honeſt thinges
He had a gardin walled all with ſton,
So fayre a gardin wote I no wher non;
For out of doute I veraily ſuppoſe
That he that wrote The Romant of the Roſe
Ne coude of it the beautee wel deviſe;
Ne Priapus ne mighte not ſuffiſe,
Though he be god of Gardins, for to tell
The beautee of the gardin, and the well,
That ſtood under a laurer alway grene:
Ful often time he Pluto and his quene
Proſerpina and alle hir Faerie,
Diſporten hem and maken melodie
About that well, and daunced, as men told.
This noble knight, this January the old,
Swiche deintee hath in it to walke and pley,
That he wol ſuffre no wight bere the key
Sauf he himſelf, for of the ſmal wiket
He bare alway of ſilver a cliket,
With which whan that him liſt he it unſhette;
And whan that he wold pay his wives dette
In ſomer ſeſon thider wold he go,
And May his wif, and no wight but they two;

And thinges which that were not don a-bedde
He in the gardin parfourmed hem, and ſpedde.
  And in this wiſe many a mery day
Lived this January and freſhe May:
But worldly joye may not alway endure
To January ne to no creature.
  O ſoden hap, o thou Fortune unſtable!
Like to the ſcorpion ſo deceivable,
That flatreſt with thy hed whan thou wolt ſting;
Thy tayl is deth thurgh thin enveniming.
O brotel joye! o ſwete poyſon queinte!
O monſtre! that ſo ſotilly canſt peinte
Thy giftes under hewe of ſtedfaſtneſſe,
That thou deceiveſt bothe more and leſſe,
Why haſt thou January thus deceived,
That haddeſt him for thy ful frend received?
And now thou haſt beraft him both his eyen,
For ſorwe of which deſireth he to dyen.
  Alas! this noble January free,
Amidde his luſt and his proſperitee,
Is waxen blind, and that al ſodenly.
He wepeth and he waileth pitouſly,
And therwithall the fire of jalouſie
(Leſt that his wif ſhuld fall in ſom folie)
So brent his herte that he wolde fain
That ſom man had both him and hire yſlain;
For nother after his deth ne in his lif
Ne wold he that ſhe were no love ne wif,

But ever live as a widewe in clothes blake,
Sole as the turtle that hath loſt hire make.
But at the laſt, after a moneth or tway
His ſorwe gan aſſwagen, ſoth to ſay;
For whan he wiſt it might non other be
He patiently toke his adverſitee;
Save out of doute he ne may nat forgon
That he n'as jalous ever more in on;
Which jalouſie it was ſo outrageous,
That neither in halle, ne in non other hous,
Ne in non other place never the mo,
He n'olde ſuffre hire for to ride or go
But if that he had honde on hire alway;
For which ful often wepeth freſhe May,
That loveth Damian ſo brenningly,
That ſhe moſte either dien ſodenly
Or elles ſhe moſte han him as hire leſt:
She waited whan hire herte wold to-breſt.
  Upon that other ſide Damian
Becomen is the ſorwefulleſt man
That ever was, for neither night ne day
Ne might he ſpeke a word to freſhe May,
As to his purpos, of no ſwiche matere,
But if that January muſt it here,
That had an hand upon hire evermo:
But natheles by writing to and fro,

℣. 9967. *ſo brenningly*] Vulg. *benignly*. Mſſ. *Aſk.* 1, 2, read *fervently*; which is probably a gloſs for the true word, *brenningly*. See before, ver. 1566. Mſ. *A.* reads *benyngly*.

And privee fignes, wift he what fhe ment,
And fhe knew eke the fin of his entent.
O January! what might it thee availe
Though thou might feen as fer as fhippes faile?
For as good is blind to deceived be
As be deceived whan a man may fee.
Lo Argus, which that had an hundred eyen,
For all that ever he coude pore or prien,
Yet was he blent, and, God wot, fo ben mo,
That wenen wifly that it be not fo.
Paffe over is an efe; I fay no more.
This frefhe May, of which I fpake of yore,
In warm wex hath enprented the cliket
That January bare of the fmal wiket,
By which into his gardin oft he went,
And Damian, that knew all hire entent,
The cliket contrefeted prively:
Ther n'is no more to fay, but haftily
Som wonder by this cliket fhal betide,
Which ye fhul heren if ye wol abide.
O noble Ovide! foth fayeft thou, God wote,
What fleight is it, if Love be long and hote,

℣. 9983. *For as good is*] The reading in the text is from mf. *Afk.* 1; mf. *A.* reads thus;

For *as good is* al blind deceived be.

I fhould not diflike

For as good is al blind deceived *to* be
As be deceived whan a man may fee.

Ver. 10000. *What fleight is it*] Thefe lines are a little different in mff. *C.* 1, *HA.*

What fleighte is it, *though it* be long and hote,
That *Love* n'il find it out in fom manere?

That he n'ill find it out in ſom manere?
By Pyramus and Thiſbe may men lere;
Though they were kept ful long and ſtreit over all,
They ben accorded, rowning thurgh a wall,
Ther no wight coude han founden ſwiche a ſleighte.
But now to purpos. Er that daies eighte
Were paſſed of the month of Juil, befill
That January hath caught ſo gret a will,
Thurgh egging of his wif, him for to play
In his gardin, and no wight but they tway,
That in a morwe unto this May ſaid he,
Riſe up, my wif, my love, my lady free!
The turtles vois is herd, myn owen ſwete!
The winter is gon, with all his raines wete.
Come forth now with thin eyen columbine;
Wel fairer ben thy breſts than ony wine.
The gardin is encloſed all aboute;
Come forth, my white ſpouſe, for out of doute
Thou haſt me wounded in myn herte, o wif!
No ſpot in thee n'as never in all thy lif.
Come forth, and let us taken our diſport;
I cheſe thee for my wif and my comfort.
  Swiche olde lewed wordes uſed he.
On Damian a ſigne made ſhe,
That he ſhuld go before with his cliket.
This Damian hath opened the wiket,
And in he ſtert, and that in ſwiche manere
That no wight might him ſee neyther yhere,

And ſtill he ſit under a buſh. Anon
This January, as blind as is a ſton,
With Maius in his hand, and no wight mo,
Into this freſhe gardin is ago,
And clapped to the wiket ſodenly.
  Now wif, quod he, here n'is but thou and I,
That art the creature that I beſt love;
For by that Lord that ſit in heven above
I hadde lever dien on a knif
Than thee offenden, dere trewe wif.
For Goddes ſake thinke how I thee chees,
Not for no covetiſe douteles,
But only for the love I had to thee.
And though that I be old and may not ſee,
Beth to me trewe, and I wol tell you why;
Certes three thinges ſhal ye win therby;
Firſt love of Criſt, and to yourſelf honour,
And all min heritage, toun and tour;
I yeve it you, maketh chartres as you leſt:
This ſhal be don to-morwe er ſonne reſt,
So wiſly God my ſoule bring to bliſſe:
I pray you on this covenant ye me kiſſe.
And though that I be jalous wite me nought;
Ye ben ſo depe enprented in my thought,
That whan that I conſider your beautee,
And therwithall the unlikely elde of me,
I may not certes, though I ſhulde die,
Forbere to ben out of your compagnie

For veray love; this is withouten doute:
Now kiſſe me, wif, and let us rome aboute.
This freſhe May, whan ſhe thiſe wordes herd,
Benignely to January anſwerd,
But firſt and forward ſhe began to wepe:
I have, quod ſhe, a ſoule for to kepe
As wel as ye, and alſo min honour,
And of my wifhood, thilke tendre flour
Which that I have aſſured in your hond,
Whan that the preeſt to you my body bond,
Wherfore I wol anſwere in this manere,
With leve of you, myn owen lord ſo dere.
I pray to God that never daw that day
That I ne ſterve, as foule as woman may,
If ever I do unto my kin that ſhame,
Or elles I empeire ſo my name
That I be falſe; and if I do that lakke
Do ſtripen me and put me in a ſakke,
And in the nexte river do me drenche:
I am a gentil woman and no wenche.
Why ſpeke ye thus? but men ben ever untrewe,
And women han repreſe of you ay newe.
Ye con non other daliance, I leve,
But ſpeke to us as of untruſt and repreve.
And with that word ſhe ſaw wher Damian
Sat in the buſh, and coughen ſhe began;
And with hire finger a ſigne made ſhe
That Damian ſhuld climbe up on a tre

That charged was with fruit, and up he went;
For veraily he knew all hire entent,
And every ſigne that ſhe coude make,
Wel bet than January her owen make;
For in a lettre ſhe had told him all
Of this matere, how that he werken ſhall.
And thus I let him ſitting in the pery,
And January and May roming ful mery.
  Bright was the day, and blew the firmament;
Phebus of gold his ſtremes doun hath ſent
To gladen every flour with his warmneſſe;
He was that time in Geminis I geſſe,
But litel fro his declination
Of Cancer, Joves exaltation.
And ſo befell in that bright morwe tide
That in the gardin, on the ferther ſide,
Pluto that is the King of Faerie,
And many a ladie in his compagnie
Folwing his wif, the Quene Proſerpina,
Which that he raviſhed out of Ethna,.
While that ſhe gadred floures in the mede,
(In Claudian ye may the ſtory rede,
How that hire in his griſely carte he fette)
This King of Faerie adoun him ſette

℣. 10104. *Which that he raviſshed out of Ethna*] So mſ. *A.* In ſome other mſſ. *Ethna*, by a manifeſt errour of the copiſt, has been changed into *Proſerpina*. The paſſage being thus made nonſenſe, other tranſcribers left out the line, and ſubſtituted this in its ſtead;

Eche after other, right as ony line.

Upon a benche of turves freſhe and grene,
And right anon thus ſaid he to his quene:
My wif, quod he, ther may no wight ſay nay,
The experience ſo preveth it every day,
The treſon which that woman doth to man:
Ten hundred thouſand ſtories tell I can
Notable of your untrouth and brotelneſſe.
O Salomon! richeſt of all richeſſe,
Fulfilled of ſapience and worldly glorie,
Ful worthy ben thy wordes to memorie
To every wight that wit and reſon can.
Thus praiſeth he the bountee yet of man;
Among a thouſand men yet fond I on,
But of all women fond I never non.
Thus ſaith this king, that knewe your wikkedneſſe:
And Jeſus, *filius* Sirach, as I geſſe,
He ſpeketh of you but ſelden reverence.
A wilde fire, a corrupt peſtilence,
So fall upon your bodies yet to-night.
Ne ſee ye not this honourable knight?
Becauſe, alas! that he is blind and old
His owen man ſhal make him cokewold:
Lo wher he ſit, the lechour, in the tree.
Now wol I graunten of my majeſtee
Unto this olde blinde worthy knight
That he ſhal have again his eyen ſight

ṽ. 10121. *Among a thouſand*] *Eccleſiaſtes* vii. 28. This argument is treated in much the ſame manner in Melibeus.

Whan that his wif wol don him vilanie,
Than ſhal he knowen all hire harlotrie,
Both in repreſe of hire and other mo.
  Ye, Sire, quod Proſerpine, and wol ye ſo?
Now by my modre Ceres ſoule I ſwere
That I ſhal yeve hire ſuffiſant anſwere,
And alle women after for hire ſake,
That though they ben in any gilt ytake
With face bold they ſhul hemſelve excuſe,
And bere hem doun that wolden hem accuſe:
For lacke of anſwere non of us ſhul dien.
Al had ye ſeen a thing with both your eyen,
Yet ſhul we ſo viſage it hardely,
And wepe, and ſwere, and chiden, ſubtilly,
That ye ſhul ben as lewed as ben gees.
  What rekketh me of your auctoritees?
I wote wel that this Jewe, this Salomon,
Fond of us women fooles many on:
But though that he ne fond no good woman,
Ther hath yfonden many an other man
Women ful good, and trewe and vertuous,
Witneſſe on hem that dwelte in Criſtes hous;
With martyrdom they preved hir conſtance.
The Romain geſtes maken remembrance

ꝟ. 10158. *The Romain geſtes*] He means the collection of ſtories called *Geſta Romanorum*, of which I once thought to ſay a few words here, in order to recommend it to a little more attention than it has hitherto met with from thoſe who have written upon the poetical inventions of the middle ages; but as many of the ſtories in that collection are taken from a treatiſe of Petrus Alphonſus, *De Clericali Diſciplinâ*, (an older and

Of many a veray trewe wif alſo.
But, Sire, ne be not wroth al be it ſo,
Though that he ſaid he fond no good woman;
I pray you take the ſentence of the man:
He ment thus, that in ſoverain bountee
N'is non but God, no, nouther he ne ſhe.
  Ey, for the veray God that n'is but on
What maken ye ſo moche of Salomon?
What though he made a temple, Goddes hous?
What though he were riche and glorious?
So made he eke a temple of falſe goddes;
How might he don a thing that more forbode is?
Parde as faire as ye his name emplaſtre
He was a lechour and an idolaſtre,
And in his elde he veray God forſoke;
And if that God ne hadde (as ſaith the boke)
Spared him for his fathers ſake, he ſholde
Han loſt his regne rather than he wolde.
  I ſete nat of all the vilanie
That he of women wrote a boterflie.
I am a woman; nedes moſte I ſpeke,
Or ſwell unto that time min herte breke:
For ſin he ſaid that we ben janglereſſes,
As ever mote I brouken hole my treſſes
I ſhal nat ſparen for no curteſie
To ſpeke him harm that ſayth us vilanie.

ſtill more forgotten work) I ſhall reſerve what I have to offer upon this ſubject till I come to The Tale of Melibeus, where Piers Alphonſo is quoted.

Dame, quod this Pluto, be no lenger wroth,
I yeve it up: but ſin I ſwore min oth
That I wold graunten him his ſight again,
My word ſhal ſtand, that warne I you certain:
I am a king, it ſit me not to lie.
And I, quod ſhe, am Quene of Faerie.
Hire anſwere ſhe ſhal han I undertake;
Let us no more wordes of it make.
Forſoth, quod he, I wol you not contrary.
Now let us turn again to January,
That in the gardin with his faire May
Singeth wel merier than the popingay;
You love I beſt, and ſhal, and other non.
So long about the alleyes is he gon,
Til he was comen again to thilke pery
Wher as this Damian ſitteth ful mery
On high, among the freſhe leves grene.
This freſhe May, that is ſo bright and ſhene,
Gan for to ſike, and ſaid, Alas, my ſide!
Now, Sire, quod ſhe, for ought that may betide
I moſte have of the peres that I ſee
Or I moſte die, ſo ſore longeth me
To eten of the ſmale peres grene;
Help for hire love that is of heven quene.
I tell you wel a woman in my plit
May have to fruit ſo gret an appetit
That ſhe may dien but ſhe of it have.
Alas! quod he, that I n'adde here a knave

That coude climbe: alas! alas! (quod he)
For I am blinde. Ye, Sire, no force, quod ſhe;
But wold ye vouchesauf, for Goddes ſake,
The pery in with your armes for to take,
(For wel I wot that ye miſtruſten me)
Than wold I climben wel ynough, (quod ſhe)
So I my fote might ſetten on your back.
Certes, ſaid he, therin ſhal be no lack,
Might I you helpen with min herte blood.
He ſtoupeth doun, and on his back ſhe ſtood,
And caught hire by a twiſt; and up ſhe goth.
(Ladies, I pray you that ye be not wroth;
I can nat gloſe; I am a rude man:)
And ſodenly anon this Damian
Gan pullen up the ſmock, and in he throng.
And whan that Pluto ſaw this grete wrong
To January he yaf again his ſight,
And made him ſee as wel as ever he might;

℣.10227. *Gan pullen*] After this verſe the editt. (except *Ca.* 2, and *Pynſ.* 1, 2,) have eight others of the loweſt and moſt ſuperfluous ribaldry that can well be conceived. It would be a mere loſs of time to argue from the lines themſelves that they were not written by Chaucer, as we have this ſhort and deciſive reaſon for rejecting them, that they are not found in any one mſ. of authority. They are not found in mſſ. *A. C.* 1, *Aſk.* 1, 2. *HA. B. C. D. G. Bod.* α. β. γ. δ. ε. ζ. *C.* 2. *T. N. Cb.* In mſſ. *E. H. I. W.* either the whole Tale or that part where they might be looked for is wanting. The only tolerable mſ. in which I have ſeen them is *F.* and there they have been added in the margin by a later hand, perhaps not older than Caxton's firſt edition.

And whan he thus had caught his fight again
Ne was ther never man of thing fo fain:
But on his wif his thought was ever mo.
  Up to the tree he caft his eyen two,
And faw how Damian his wife had dreffed
In fwiche manere it may not ben expreffed,
But if I wolde fpeke uncurteifly;
And up he yaf a roring and a cry,
As doth the mother whan the child fhal die:
Out! helpe! alas! harow! he gan to cry;
O ftronge lady ftore, what doeft thou?
And fhe anfwered, Sire, what aileth you?
Have patience and refon in your minde,
I have you holpen on both your eyen blinde.
Up peril of my foule, I fhal nat lien,
As me was taught to helpen with your eyen
Was nothing better for to make you fee
Than ftrogle with a man upon a tree:
God wot I did it in ful good entent.
  Strogle! quod he; ye, algate in it went.
Gode yeve you both on fhames deth to dien;

℣. 10240. *Out! helpe!*] Two lines which follow this in the common editt. are omitted for the reafons ftated in the note upon ver. 10227; and I fhall take the fame liberty, upon exactly the fame grounds, with four more which have been inferted in thofe editt. after ver. 10250.

℣. 10241. *O ftronge lady ftore*] As all the beft mff. fupport this reading I have not departed from it, for fear *ftore* fhould have fome fignification that I am not aware of. Some mff. have *ftoure*, mf. G. *houre*, edit. *Ca.* 2, *hore*; *hóra, meretrix*, Ifland,

He ſwived thee, I ſaw it with min eyen,
And elles be I honged by the halſe.
  Than is, quod ſhe, my medicine al falſe;
For certainly if that ye mighten ſee
Ye wold not ſay thiſe wordes unto me.
Ye have ſom glimſing, and no parfit ſight.
  I ſee, quod he, as wel as ever I might
(Thanked be God) with both min eyen two,
And by my feith me thought he did thee ſo.
  Ye maſe, ye maſen, good Sire, quod ſhe;
This thank have I for I have made you ſee:
Alas! quod ſhe, that ever I was ſo kind.
  Now Dame, quod he, let al paſſe out of mind:
Come doun, my lefe, and if I have miſſaid
God helpe me ſo as I am evil appaid:
But by my fadres ſoule I wende have ſein
How that this Damian had by thee lein,
And that thy ſmock had lein upon his breſt.
  Ye, Sire, quod ſhe, ye may wene as you leſt:
But, Sire, a man that waketh of his ſlepe
He may not ſodenly wel taken kepe
Upon a thing, ne ſeen it parfitly,
Til that he be adawed veraily:
Right ſo a man that long hath blind ybe
He may not ſodenly ſo wel yſee,

V. 10261. *Ye maſe, ye maſen*] The final *n* has been added without authority, and unneceſſarily. This line is very oddly written in mſſ. *Aſk.* 1, 2;

Ya may ya may ya quod ſhe.

Firſt whan his ſight is newe comen agein,
As he that hath a day or two yſein.
Til that your ſight yſateled be a while
Ther may ful many a ſighte you begile.
Beware, I pray you, for by heven King
Ful many a man weneth to ſee a thing,
And it is all another than it ſemeth:
He which that miſconceiveth oft miſdemeth.
  And with that word ſhe lep doun fro the tree.
This January who is glad but he?
He kiſſeth hire and clippeth hire ful oft,
And on hire wombe he ſtroketh hire ful ſoft,
And to his paleis home he hath hire lad.
Now, goode men, I pray you to be glad.
  Thus endeth here my Tale of Januarie;
God bleſſe us, and his moder Seinte Marie!

THE SQUIERES PROLOGUE.

By Goddes mercy, ſayde oure Hoſte tho,
Now ſwiche a wif I preie God kepe me fro.
Lo, ſwiche ſleightes and ſubtilitees
In women ben; for ay as beſy as bees

ỳ. 10293.] It has been ſaid in the *Diſcourſe*, &c. §. 23. that this new Prologue has been prefixed to The Squieres Tale upon the authority of the beſt mſſ. They are as follows; *A. C.* 1, *Aſk.* 1, 2, *HA. D. Bod.* α. γ. δ. The concurrence of the firſt five mſſ. would alone have been more than ſufficient to outweigh the authorities in favour of the other Prologue. Ed. *Ca.* 2, (though it has not this Prologue) agrees with theſe mſſ. in placing The Squieres Tale *after* The Marchantes.

Ben they us sely men for to deceive,
And from a sothe wol they ever weive:
By this Marchantes Tale it preveth wel.
But natheles, as trewe as any stele
I have a wif, though that she poure be,
But of hire tonge a labbing shrewe is she;
And yet she hath an hepe of vices mo.
Therof no force; let all swiche thinges go.
But wete ye what? in conseil be it seyde,
Me reweth sore I am unto hire teyde;
For and I shulde rekene every vice
Which that she hath, ywis I were to nice;
And cause why, it shulde reported be
And told to hire of som of this compagnie,
(Of whom it nedeth not for to declare,
Sin women connen utter swiche chaffare)
And eke my wit sufficeth not therto
To tellen all; wherfore my Tale is do.
  Squier, come ner, if it youre wille be,
And say somwhat of love, for certes ye
Connen theron as moche as any man.
Nay, Sire, quod he, but swiche thing as I can

v. 10298. *weive*] This verb is generally used transitively, to wave, to relinquish, a thing; but it has also a neuter signification, to depart, as here. See also ver. 4728, 9357.

v. 10312. *Sin women connen utter*] Ms. *A.* reads *oute*, but others have *utter*, which I believe is right, though I confess that I do not clearly understand the passage. The phrase has occurred before, ver. 6103;

With danger *uttren* we all our *chaffare.*

With hertly wille, for I wol not rebelle
Agein your luſt, a Tale wol I telle.
Have me excuſed if I ſpeke amis:
My wille is good; and lo, my Tale is this.

THE SQUIERES TALE.

At Sarra, in the lond of Tartarie,
Ther dwelt a king that werreied Ruſſie,
Thurgh which ther died many a doughty man.
This noble king was cleped Cambuſcan,
Which in his time was of ſo gret renoun
That ther n'as no wher in no regioun
So excellent a lord in alle thing;
Him lacked nought that longeth to a king,
As of the ſecte of which that he was borne.
He kept his lay to which he was yſworne,
And therto he was hardy, wiſe, and riche,
And pitous and juſt, and alway yliche,
Trewe of his word, benigne and honourable,
Of his corage as any centre ſtable,
Yong, freſh, and ſtrong, in armes deſirous,
As any bacheler of all his hous.
A faire perſon he was and fortunate,
And kept alway ſo wel real eſtat

The Squieres Tale] The King of Araby ſendith to Cambuſcan King of Sarra a horſe and a ſword of rare qualite, and to his daughter Canace a glaſs and a ring, by the virtue whereof ſhe underſtandeth the language of all ſowles. Much of this Tale is either loſt or elſe never finiſhed by Chaucer. *Urry*.

That ther n'as no wher ſwiche another man.
  This noble king, this Tartre Cambuſcan,
Hadde two ſones by Elfeta his wif,
Of which the eldeſt ſone highte Algarſif,
That other was ycleped Camballo.
  A doughter had this worthy king alſo,
That yongeſt was, and highte Canace:
But for to tellen you all hire beautee
It lith not in my tonge ne in my conning;
I dare not undertake ſo high a thing:
Min Engliſh eke is unſufficient;
It muſte ben a rethor excellent,
That coude his colours longing for that art,
If he ſhuld hire deſcriven ony part:
I am non ſwiche; I mote ſpeke as I can.
  And ſo befel that whan this Cambuſcan
Hath twenty winter borne his diademe,
As he was wont fro yere to yere I deme,
He let the feſte of his nativitee
Don crien thurghout Sarra his citee
The laſt idus of March after the yere.
  Phebus the ſonne ful jolif was and clere,
For he was nigh his exaltation
In Martes face, and in his manſion

℣. 10344. *Of which the eldeſt ſone*] I have added *ſone* for the ſake of the metre.

℣. 10364. *and in his manſion*] *His* refers to Mars, and not to the ſun. "Aries eſt l'exaltation du Soleil ou 19 degre. et ſi eſt "Aries *maiſon de Mars*," *Calend. des Berg.* ſign. I. *ult.* Leo

In Aries, the colerike hote ſigne:
Ful luſty was the wether and benigne,
For which the foules again the ſonne ſhene:
What for the ſeſon and the yonge grene
Ful loude ſongen hir affections:
Hem ſemed han getten hem protections
Again the ſwerd of winter kene and cold.
This Cambuſcan, of which I have you told,
In real veſtiments, ſit on his deis
With diademe, ful high in his paleis,
And holt his feſte ſo ſolempne and ſo riche
That in this world ne was ther non it liche,
Of which if I ſhal tellen all the array
Than wold it occupie a ſomers day;
And eke it nedeth not for to deviſe
At every cours the order of hir ſervice:
I wol not tellen of hir ſtrange ſewes,
Ne of hir ſwannes ne hir heronſewes:

was the *manſion* of the ſun, *ibid.* ſign. K. 1. Aries is there alſo ſaid to be *ſigne chault et ſec.*

ṽ. 10381. *ſtrange ſewes*] A ſewer was an officer ſo called from his placing the diſhes upon the table. *Aſſeour*, Fr. from *aſſeoir*, to place. In the eſtabliſhment of the king's houſehold there are ſtill four Gentlemen Sewers. *Sewes* here ſeem to ſignify diſhes, from the ſame original, as *aſſiete*, in Fr. ſtill ſignifies a little diſh or plate. See *Gower*, *Conf. Amant.* fol. 115, b.;

The fleſhe, whan it was ſo to-hewe,
She taketh, and maketh therof a *ſewe.*——

ṽ. 10382. *heronſewes*] *Heronceaux*, Fr. according to the Gloſſary. At the intronization of Archbiſhop Nevil, 6 Edw. IV. there were *heronſhawes* iiii C. *Lel. Collect.* vol. vi. 2. At another feaſt in 1530 we read of 16 *hearonſews*, every one 12d. *Peck's D. C.* vol. ii. 12.

Eke in that lond, as tellen knightes old,
Ther is ſom mete that is ful deintee hold,
That in this lond men recche of it ful ſmal:
Ther n'is no man that may reporten al.
I wol not tarien you, for it is prime,
And for it is no fruit, but loſſe of time:
Unto my purpoſe I wol have recours.
  And ſo befell that after the thridde cours,
While that this king ſit thus in his nobley,
Herking his miniſtralles hir thinges pley,
Beforne him at his bord deliciouſly,
In at the halle dore al ſodenly
Ther came a knight upon a ſtede of bras,
And in his hond a brod mirrour of glas;
Upon his thombe he had of gold a ring,
And by his ſide a naked ſwerd hanging;
And up he rideth to the highe bord.
In all the halle ne was ther ſpoke a word
For mervaille of this knight; him to behold
Ful beſily they waiten yong and old.
  This ſtrange knight that come thus ſodenly,
Al armed ſave his hed ful richely,
Salueth king and quene, and lordes alle,
By order as they ſaten in the halle,
With ſo high reverence and obſervance,
As wel in ſpeche as in his contenance,
That Gawain with his olde curteſie,
Though he were come agen out of Faerie,

Ne coude him not amenden with a word:
And after this beforn the highe bord
He with a manly vois ſayd his meſſage,
After the forme uſed in his langage,
Withouten vice of ſillable or of letter:
And for his tale ſhulde ſeme the better,
Accordant to his wordes was his chere,
As techeth art of ſpeche hem that it lere.
Al be it that I cannot ſoune his ſtile,
Ne cannot climben over ſo high a ſtile,
Yet ſay I this, as to comun entent,
Thus much amounteth all that ever he ment,
If it ſo be that I have it in mind.
He ſayd, The King of Arabie and of Inde,
My liege Lord, on this ſolempne day,
Salueth you as he beſt can and may,
And ſendeth you, in honour of your feſte,
By me, that am al redy at your heſte,
This ſtede of bras, that eſily and wel
Can in the ſpace of a day naturel
(This is to ſayn, in four-and-twenty houres)
Wher ſo you liſt, in drought or elles ſhoures,
Beren your body into every place
To which your herte willeth for to pace,
Withouten wemme of you thurgh foule or faire;
Or if you liſt to fleen as high in the aire
As doth an egle, whan him liſt to ſore,
This ſame ſtede ſhal bere you evermore,

Withouten harme, till ye be ther you leſt,
(Though that ye ſlepen on his back or reſt)
And turne again with writhing of a pin;
He that it wrought he coude many a gin;
He waited many a conſtellation
Or he had don this operation,
And knew ful many a ſele and many a bond.
  This mirrour eke that I have in min hond
Hath ſwiche a might that men may in it ſee
Whan ther ſhal falle ony adverſitee
Unto your regne or to yourſelf alſo,
And openly who is your frend or fo;
And over all this, if any lady bright
Hath ſet hire herte on any maner wight,
If he be falſe ſhe ſhal his treſon ſee,
His newe love, and all his ſubtiltee,
So openly that ther ſhal nothing hide.
  Wherfore again this luſty ſomer tide
This mirrour and this ring, that ye may ſe,
He hath ſent to my Lady Canace,
Your excellente doughter that is here.
  The vertue of this ring, if ye wol here,
Is this, that if hire liſt it for to were
Upon hire thombe, or in hire purſe it bere,
Ther is no foule that fleeth under heven
That ſhe ne ſhal wel underſtond his ſteven,
And know his mening openly and plaine,
And anſwere him in his langage again;

And every gras that groweth upon rote
She ſhal eke know, and whom it wol do bote,
All be his woundes never ſo depe and wide.
  This naked ſwerd, that hangeth by my ſide,
Swiche vertue hath, that what man that it ſmite,
Thurghout his armure it wol kerve and bite,
Were it as thicke as is a braunched oke;
And what man that is wounded with the ſtroke
Shal never be hole, til that you liſt of grace
To ſtroken him with the platte in thilke place
Ther he is hurt; this is as much to ſain,
Ye moten with the platte ſwerd again
Stroken him in the wound and it wol cloſe.
This is the veray ſoth withouten gloſe:
It failleth not while it is in your hold.
  And whan this knight hath thus his tale told
He rideth out of halle, and doun he light.
His ſtede, which that ſhone as ſonne bright,
Stant in the court as ſtille as any ſton.
This knight is to his chambre ladde anon,
And is unarmed, and to the mete yſette.
Thiſe preſents ben ful richelich yfette,
This is to ſain, the ſwerd and the mirrour,
And borne anon into the highe tour
With certain officers ordained therfore;
And unto Canace the ring is bore
Solempnely, ther ſhe ſat at the table.
But ſikerly, withouten any fable,

The hors of bras, that may not be remued,
It ſtant as it were to the ground yglued:
Ther may no man out of the place it drive
For non engine of windas or polive:
And cauſe why, for they con not the craft,
And therfore in the place they han it laft
Til that the knight hath taught hem the manere
To voiden him, as ye ſhal after here.

Gret was the prees that ſwarmed to and fro
To gauren on this hors that ſtondeth ſo;
For it ſo high was, and ſo brod and long,
So wel proportioned for to be ſtrong,
Right as it were a ſtede of Lumbardie,
Therwith ſo horſly and ſo quik of eye
As it a gentil Poileis courſer were;
For certes fro his tayl unto his ere
Nature ne art ne coud him not amend
In no degree, as all the peple wend.

But evermore hir moſte wonder was
How that it coude gon and was of bras:

ṽ. 10509. *a gentil Poileis courſer*] A horſe of Apulia, which in old French was uſually called *Poille*. The horſes of that country were much eſteemed. Mſ. *Bod.* James VI. 142. Richard Archbiſhop of Armagh, in the 14th century, ſays in praiſe of our St. Thomas, "Quod nec mulus Hiſpaniæ, nec dextrarius "Apuliæ, nec repedo Æthiopiæ, nec elephantus Aſiæ, nec ca- "melus Syriæ, hoc a ſino noſtra Angliæ aptior ſive audentior in- "venitur ad prælia." He had before informed his audience that "Thomas Anglice idem eſt quod Thom. Aſinus." There is a patent in *Rymer*, 2 Edw. II. "De dextrariis in Lumbardiâ "emendis."

It was of Faerie, as the peple ſemed:
Diverſe folk diverſely han demed:
As many heds as many wittes ben.
They murmured as doth a ſwarme of been,
And maden ſkilles after hir fantaſies,
Reherſing of the olde poetries,
And ſayd it was ylike the Pegaſee,
The hors that hadde winges for to flee,
Or elles it was the Grekes hors Sinon,
That broughte Troye to deſtruction,
As men moun in thiſe olde geſtes rede.
  Min herte (quod on) is evermore in drede;
I trow ſom men of armes ben therin,
That ſhapen hem this citee for to win:
It were right good that al ſwiche thing were know.
Another rowned to his felaw low,
And ſayd, He lieth, for it is rather like
An apparence ymade by ſom magike,
As jogelours plaien at thiſe feſtes grete.
Of ſondry doutes thus they jangle and trete,
As lewed peple demen comunly
Of thinges that ben made more ſubtilly
Than they can in hir lewedneſſe comprehende:
They demen gladly to the badder ende.
  And ſom of hem wondred on the mirrour
That born was up in to the maiſter tour,

V. 10523. *the Grekes hors Sinon*] This is rather an awkward expreſſion for—*the horſe of Sinon the Greek*, or, as we might ſay, *Sinon the Greek's horſe.*

How men mighte in it swiche thingés see.
  Another answerd and sayd, It might wel be
Naturelly by compositions
Of angles and of slie reflections;
And saide that in Rome was swiche on.
They speke of Alhazen and Vitellon,
And Aristotle, that writen in hir lives
Of queinte mirrours and of prospectives,
As knowen they that han hir bookes herd.
  And other folk han wondred on the swerd
That wolde percen thurghout every thing;
And fell in speche of Telephus the king,
And of Achilles for his queinte spere,
For he coude with it bothe hele and dere,
Right in swiche wise as men may with the swerd
Of which right now ye have yourselven herd.
They speken of sondry harding of metall,
And speken of medicines therwithall,
And how and whan it shuld yharded be,
Which is unknow algates unto me.
  Tho speken they of Canacees ring,
And saiden all that swiche a wonder thing

℣. 10546. *Alhazen and Vitellon*] *Alhazeni et Vitellonis Optice* are extant, printed at Basil 1572. The first is supposed by his editor to have lived about *A. D.* 1100, and the second to *A. D.* 1270.

℣. 10561. *Canacees*] This word should perhaps have had an accent on the first *e*. --*Canacées*, to shew that it is to be pronounced as of four syllables. So also below, ver. 10945;

And swouneth eft in *Canacees* barme.

Of craft of ringes herd they never non,
Save that he Moises and King Salomon
Hadden a name of conning in swiche art.
Thus sain the peple, and drawen hem apart.
 But natheles som saiden that it was
Wonder to maken of ferne ashen glas,
And yet is glas nought like ashen of ferne;
But for they han yknowen it so ferne,
Therfore ceseth hir jangling and hir wonder.
 As sore wondren som on cause of thonder,
On ebbe and floud, on gossomer and on mist,
And on all thing til that the cause is wist.
 Thus janglen they, and demen and devise,
Til that the king gan fro his bord arise.
 Phebus hath left the angle meridional,
And yet ascending was the beste real,
The gentil Leon, with his Aldrian,
Whan that this Tartre king, this Cambuscan,
Rose from his bord, ther as he sat ful hie:
Beforne him goth the loude minstralcie,
Til he come to his chambre of paraments,
Ther as they sounden divers instruments,
That it is like an heven for to here.
 Now dauncen lusty Venus children dere,

℣. 10570. *yknowen it so ferne*] Known it so before. I take *ferne* to be a corruption of *forne*, (*foran*, Sax.) So in *Tro.* ver. 1176, *ferne yere* seems to signify former years. In *P. P.* fol. 80, b. *ferne ago* is used as long ago.

℣. 10583. *chambre of paraments*] *Chambre de parement* is translated by Cotgrave the presence-chamber, and *Lit de pare-*

For in the Fiſh hir lady ſat ful hie,
And loketh on hem with a frendly eye.
  This noble king is ſet upon his trone,
This ſtraùnge knight is ſet to him ful ſone,
And on the daunce he goth with Canace.
  Here is the revell and the jolitee
That is not able a dull man to deviſe:
He muſt han knowen Love and his ſerviſe,
And ben a feſtlich man, as freſh as May,
That ſhulde you deviſen ſwiche array.
  Who coude tellen you the forme of daunces
So uncouth, and ſo freſhe contenaunces,
Swiche ſubtil lokings and diſſimulings,
For dred of jalous mennes apperceivings?
No man but Launcelot, and he is ded;
Therfore I paſſe over all this luſtyhed;
I ſay no more, but in this jolineſſe
I lete hem til men to the ſouper hem dreſſe.
  The ſteward bit the ſpices for to hie,
And eke the win, in all this melodie;

ment a bed of ſtate. *Parements* originally ſignified all ſorts of ornamental furniture or clothes, from *parer*, Fr. to adorn. See ver. 2503, and *Leg. of G. W. Dido*, ver. 181;

> To dauncing *chambres*, ful of *parementes*,
> Of riche beddes and of pavementes,
> This Eneas is ledde after the mete.

The Italians have the ſame expreſſion; *Iſt. d. Conc. Trident.* l. iii.; "Il Pontefice—ritornato alla *camera de' paramenti* co' "Cardinali."—

ỽ. 10587. *in the Fiſh*] See the note on ver. 6284.

The uſhers and the ſquierie ben gon,
The ſpices and the win is come anon:
They ete and drinke, and whan this had an end
Unto the temple, as reſon was, they wend:
The ſervice don they ſoupen all by day.
  What nedeth you reherſen hir array?
Eche man wot wel that at a kinges feſt
Is plentee to the moſt and to the leſt,
And deintees mo than ben in my knowing.
  At after ſouper goth this noble king
To ſeen this hors of bras, with all a route
Of lordes and of ladies him aboute.
Swiche wondring was ther on this hors of bras,
That ſin the gret aſſege of Troye was
Ther as men wondred on an hors alſo,
Ne was ther ſwiche a wondring as was tho.
But, finally, the king aſketh the knight
The vertue of this courſer and the might,
And praied him to tell his governaunce.
  This hors anon gan for to trip and daunce,
Whan that the knight laid hond up on his rein,
And ſaide, Sire, ther n'is no more to ſain,
But whan you liſt to riden any where
Ye moten trill a pin ſtant in his ere,
Which I ſhal tellen you betwixt us two,
Ye moten nempne him to what place alſo,
Or to what contree, that you liſt to ride.
  And whan ye come ther as you liſt abide

Bid him descend, and trill another pin,
(For therin lieth the effect of all the gin)
And he wol doun descend and don your will,
And in that place he wol abiden still;
Though al the world had the contrary swore
He shal not thennes be drawe ne be bore:
Or if you list to bid him thennes gon
Trille this pin, and he wol vanish anon
Out of the sight of every maner wight,
And come agen, be it by day or night,
Whan that you list to clepen him again
In swiche a guise as I shal to you sain
Betwixen you and me, and that ful sone.
Ride whan you list, ther n'is no more to done.
  Enfourmed whan the king was of the knight,
And hath conceived in his wit aright
The maner and the forme of all this thing,
Ful glad and blith this noble doughty king
Repaireth to his revel as beforne.
The bridel is in to the tour yborne,
And kept among his jewels lefe and dere:
The hors vanisht, I n'ot in what manere,
Out of hir sight; ye get no more of me:
But thus I lete in lust and jolitee
This Cambuscan his lordes festeying
Til that wel nigh the day began to spring.

℣. 10660. *Til that wel nigh*] *That* has been added for the sake of the metre. We might read, with some mss.;
Til wel nigh the day began *for* to spring.

Pars secunda.

The norice of degestion, the slepe,
Gan on hem winke, and bad hem taken kepe
That mochel drinke and labour wol have rest,
And with a galping mouth hem all he kest,
And said, that it was time to lie adoun,
For blood was in his dominatioun:
Cherisheth blood, natures frend, quod he.
They thanken him galping, by two, by three;
And every wight gan drawe him to his rest,
As slepe hem bade; they toke it for the best.
Hir dremes shul not now be told for me;
Ful were hir hedes of fumositee,
That causeth dreme, of which ther is no charge:
They slepen til that it was prime large,
The moste part, but it were Canace;
She was ful mesurable, as women be;
For of hire father had she take hire leve
To gon to rest sone after it was eve;
Hire liste not appalled for to be,
Nor on the morwe unfestliche for to see,
And slept hire firste slepe, and than awoke:
For swiche a joy she in hire herte toke
Both of hire queinte ring and of hire mirrour,
That twenty time she chaunged hire colour.

℣. 10663. *That mochel drinke and labour*] So mss. *C.* 1, *HA.* In ms. *A.* it is, *That mirthe and labour*; in *Ask.* 1, 2, *That after moche labour*; in several other mss. and editt. *Ca.* 1, 2, *That moche mete and labour.* We must search further, I apprehend, for the true reading.

And in hire ſlepe right for the impreſſion
Of hire mirrour ſhe had a viſion;
Wherfore or that the ſonne gan up glide
She clepeth upon hire maiſtreſſe hire beſide,
And ſaide that hire luſte for to ariſe.
Thiſe olde women that ben gladly wiſe,
As is hire maiſtreſſe, anſwerd hire anon,
And ſaid, Madam, whider wol ye gon
Thus erly? for the folk ben all in reſt.
I wol, quod ſhe, ariſen (for me leſt
No longer for to ſlepe) and walken aboute.
Hire maiſtreſſe clepeth women a gret route,
And up they riſen wel a ten or twelve;
Up riſeth freſhe Canace hireſelve,
As rody and bright as the yonge ſonne
That in the Ram is foure degrees yronne;
No higher was he whan ſhe redy was;
And forth ſhe walketh eſily a pas,
Arrayed after the luſty ſeſon ſote
Lightely for to playe, and walken on fote,
Nought but with five or ſixe of hire meinie,
And in a trenche forth in the park goth ſhe.
The vapour which that fro the erthe glode
Maketh the ſonne to ſeme rody and brode;
But natheles it was ſo faire a ſight
That it made all hir hertes for to light,
What for the ſeſon and the morwening,
And for the foules that ſhe herde ſing,

For right anon ſhe wiſte what they ment
Right by hir ſong, and knew al hir entent.
The knotte why that every tale is tolde,
If it be taried til the luſt be colde
Of hem that han it herkened after yore,
The ſavour paſſeth ever lenger the more
For fulſumneſſe of the prolixitee;
And by that ſame reſon thinketh me
I ſhuld unto the knotte condeſcende,
And maken of hire walking ſone an ende.
Amidde a tree for-dry, as white as chalk,
As Canace was playing in hire walk,
Ther ſat a faucon over hire hed ful hie
That with a pitous vois ſo gan to crie,
That all the wood reſouned of hire cry,
And beten had hireſelf ſo pitouſly
With both hire winges til the rede blood
Ran endelong the tree ther as ſhe ſtood;
And ever in on alway ſhe cried and ſhright,
And with hire bek hireſelven ſhe ſo twight,
That ther n'is tigre ne no cruel beſt
That dwelleth other in wood or in foreſt
That n'olde han wept, if that he wepen coude,
For ſorwe of hire, ſhe ſhright alway ſo loude.
For ther was never yet no man on live,
If that he coude a faucon wel deſcrive,
That herde of ſwiche another of fayreneſſe
As wel of plumage as of gentileſſe

Of ſhape, of all that might yrekened be:
A faucon peregrine ſemed ſhe
Of fremde lond, and ever as ſhe ſtood
She ſwouned now and now for lack of blood,
Til wel neigh is ſhe fallen fro the tree.
This faire kinges doughter Canace,
That on hire finger bare the queinte ring,
Thurgh which ſhe underſtood wel every thing
That any foule may in his leden ſain,
And coude anſwere him in his leden again,
Hath underſtonden what this faucon ſeyd,
And wel neigh for the routhe almoſt ſhe deyd;
And to the tree ſhe goth ful haſtily,
And on this faucon loketh pitouſly,
And held hire lap abrode, for wel ſhe wiſt
The faucon muſte fallen from the twiſt
Whan that ſhe ſwouned next, for faute of blood.
A longe while to waiten hire ſhe ſtood,
Til at the laſt ſhe ſpake in this manere
Unto the hauk, as ye ſhul after here:

℣. 10742. *A faucon peregrine*] This ſpecies of falcon is thus deſcribed in the *Treſor de Brunet Latin*, *P.* 1, *Ch. Des faucons*, mſ. *Reg.* 19 *C. X.*; " La ſeconde lignie eſt *faucons*, que hom " apele *pelerins*, par ce que nus ne trove ſon ni. ains eſt pris " autreſi come en *pelerinage*. et eſt mult legiers a norrir, et " mult cortois, et vaillans, et de bone maniere " Chaucer adds, that this falcon was of *fremde* or *fremed lond*, from a foreign country.

℣. 10749. *leden*] *Language*, Sax. a corruption of Latin. Dante uſes *Latino* in the ſame ſenſe, *Canz.* 1;

E cantine gli augelli
Ciaſcuno in ſuo *Latino*.

What is the cauſe, if it be for to tell,
That ye ben in this furial peine of hell?
Quod Canace unto this hauk above;
Is this for ſorwe of deth or loſſe of love?
For as I trow thiſe be the cauſes two
That cauſen moſt a gentil herte wo.
Of other harme it nedeth not to ſpeke,
For ye yourſelf upon yourſelf awreke,
Which preveth wel that other ire or drede
Mote ben encheſon of your cruel dede,
Sin that I ſe non other wight you chace.
For the love of God as doth yourſelven grace;
Or what may be your helpe? for weſt ne eſt
Ne ſaw I never er now no brid ne beſt
That ferde with himſelf ſo pitouſly.
Ye ſle me with your ſorwe veraily,
I have of you ſo gret compaſſioun.
For Goddes love come fro the tree adoun,
And as I am a kinges doughter trewe,
If that I veraily the cauſes knewe
Of your diſeſe, if it lay in my might
I wold amend it or that it were night,
As wiſly help me the gret God of kind;
And herbes ſhal I right ynough yfind
To helen with your hurtes haſtily.
Tho ſhright this faucon yet more pitouſly
Than ever ſhe did, and fell to ground anon,
And lith aſwoune as ded as lith a ſton,

Til Canace hath in hire lappe hire take
Unto that time ſhe gan of ſwoune awake,
And after that ſhe out of ſwoune abraide
Right in hire haukes leden thus ſhe ſayde:
That pitee renneth ſone in gentil herte
(Feling his ſimilitude in peines ſmerte)
Is proved alle day, as men may ſee
As wel by werke as by auctoritee,
For gentil herte kitheth gentilleſſe.
I ſee wel that ye have on my diſtreſſe
Compaſſion, my faire Canace,
Of veray womanly benignitee
That Nature in your principles hath ſet.
But for non hope for to fare the bet,
But for to obey unto your herte free,
And for to maken other yware by me,
As by the whelpe chaſtiſed is the leon,
Right for that cauſe and that concluſion,
While that I have a leiſer and a ſpace,
Min harme I wol confeſſen er I pace.
And ever while that on hire ſorwe told
That other wept as ſhe to water wold,
Til that the faucon bad hire to be ſtill,
And with a ſike right thus ſhe ſaid hire till:
Ther I was bred (alas that ilke day!)
And foſtred in a roche of marble gray
So tendrely, that nothing ailed me;
I ne wiſt not what was adverſitee

Til I coud flee ful high under the ſkie.
  Tho dwelled a tercelet me faſte by
That ſemed welle of alle gentilleſſe,
Al were he ful of treſon and falſeneſſe.
It was ſo wrapped under humble chere,
And under hew of trouth in ſwiche manere,
Under pleſance, and under beſy peine,
That no wight coud have wend he coude feine,
So depe in greyn he died his coloures.
Right as a ſerpent hideth him under floures,
Til he may ſee his time for to bite,
Right ſo this god of Loves hypocrite
Doth ſo his ceremonies and obeiſance,
And kepeth in ſemblaunt alle his obſervance
That ſouneth unto gentilleſſe of love.
As on a tombe is all the faire above,
And under is the corps, ſwiche as ye wote,
Swiche was this hypocrite both cold and hote,
And in this wiſe he ſerved his entent,
That ſave the fend non wiſte what he ment;
Til he ſo long had weped and complained,
And many a yere his ſervice to me fained,
Till that min herte, to pitous and to nice,
Al innocent of his crowned malice,

ỳ. 10840. *crowned malice*] The reader of taſte will not be diſpleaſed, I truſt, at my having received this reading upon the authority of mſ. *A.* only: the common reading is *cruel.*

For-fered of his deth, as thoughte me,
Upon his othes and his ſeuretee
Graunted him love on this conditioun,
That evermo min honour and renoun
Were ſaved, both privee and apert;
This is to ſay, that after his deſert
I yave him all min herte and all my thought,
(God wote and he that other wayes nought)
And toke his herte in chaunge of min for ay.
But ſoth is ſaid, gon ſithen is many a day
A trewe wight and a theef thinken not on.
And whan he ſaw the thing ſo fer ygon,
That I had granted him fully my love,
In ſwiche a guiſe as I have ſaid above,
And yeven him my trewe herte as free
As he ſwore that he yaf his herte to me,
Anon this tigre, ful of doubleneſſe,
Fell on his knees with ſo gret humbleſſe,
With ſo high reverence, as by his chere,
So like a gentil lover of manere,
So raviſhed, as it ſemed, for the joye,
That never Jaſon ne Paris of Troye,
Jaſon! certes ne never other man
Sin Lamech was, that alderfirſt began
To loven two, as writen folk beforne,
Ne never ſithen the firſt man was borne,
Ne coude man by twenty thouſand part
Contrefete the ſophimes of his art,

Ne were worthy to unbocle his galoche,
Ther doubleneſſe of faining ſhuld approche,
Ne coude ſo thanke a wight as he did me.
His maner was an heven for to ſee
To any woman, were ſhe never ſo wiſe,
So painted he and kempt at point deviſe
As wel his wordes as his contenance:
And I ſo loved him for his obeiſance,
And for the trouthe I demed in his herte,
That if ſo were that any thing him ſmerte,
Al were it never ſo lite, and I it wiſt,
Me thought I felt deth at myn herte twiſt.
And, ſhortly, ſo ferforth this thing is went,
That my will was his willes inſtrument;
This is to ſay, my will obeied his will
In alle thing, as fer as reſon fill,
Keping the boundes of my worſhip ever:
Ne never had I thing ſo leſe ne lever
As him, God wot, ne never ſhal no mo.
  This laſteth lenger than a yere or two,
That I ſuppoſed of him nought but good:
But, finally, thus at the laſt it ſtood,
That Fortune wolde that he muſte twin
Out of that place which that I was in.
Wher me was wo it is no queſtion;
I cannot make of it deſcription:
For o thing dare I tellen boldely,
I know what is the peine of deth therby,

Swiche harme I felt, for he ne might byleve.
So on a day of me he toke his leve,
So ſorweful eke, that I wend veraily
That he had felt as mochel harme as I,
Whan that I herd him ſpeke and ſaw his hewe:
But natheles I thought he was ſo trewe,
And eke that he repairen ſhuld again
Within a litel while, ſoth for to ſain,
And reſon wold eke that he muſte go
For his honour, as often happeth ſo,
That I made vertue of neceſſitee,
And toke it wel ſin that it muſte be.
As I beſt might I hid fro him my ſorwe,
And toke him by the hond, Seint John to borwe,
And ſaid him thus, Lo, I am youres all,
Beth ſwiche as I have ben to you and ſhall.
What he anſwerd it nedeth not reherſe;
Who can ſay bet than he, who can do werſe?
Whan he hath al wel ſaid than hath he done;
Therfore behoveth him a ful long ſpone
That ſhal ete with a fend; thus herd I ſay.
So at the laſt he muſte forth his way;
And forth he fleeth, til he come ther him leſt.
Whan it came him to purpos for to reſt,
I trow that he had thilke text in mind,
That alle thing repairing to his kind

℣. 10921. *thilke text*] *Boethius*, l. iii. met. 2;
Repetunt proprios quæque recurſus,
Redituque ſuo ſingula gaudent——

Gladeth himfelf; thus fain men as I geffe:
Men loven of propre kind newefangelneffe,
As briddes don that men in cages fede;
For though thou night and day take of hem hede,
And ftrew hir cage faire and foft as filke,
And give hem fugre, hony, bred, and milke,
Yet right anon as that his dore is up
He with his feet wol fpurnen doun his cup,
And to the wood he wol and wormes ete,
So newefangel ben they of hir mete,
And loven noveltees of propre kind;
No gentilleffe of blood ne may hem bind.
  So ferd this tercelet, alas the day!
Though he were gentil borne, and frefh, and gay,
And goodly for to feen, and humble, and free.
He faw upon a time a kite flee,
And fodenly he loved this kite fo
That all his love is clene from me ago,
And hath his trouthe falfed in this wife.
Thus hath the kite my love in hire fervice,
And I am lorn withouten remedy.
  And with that word this faucon gan to cry,
And fwouneth eft in Canacees barme.
Gret was the forwe for that haukes harme

which our Author has thus tranflated; "All thynges feken "ayen to hir propre courfe, and all thynges rejoyfen on hir "retourninge agayne to hir nature." The comparifon of the bird is taken from the fame place.

That Canace and all hire women made;
They n'iften how they might the faucon glade:
But Canace home bereth hire in hire lap,
And foftely in plaftres gan hire wrap
Ther as fhe with hire bek had hurt hirefelve.
 Now cannot Canace but herbes delve
Out of the ground, and maken falves newe
Of herbes precious and fine of hewe
To helen with this hauk: fro day to night
She doth hire befineffe and all hire might.
And by hire beddes hed fhe made a mew,
And covered it with velouettes blew,
In figne of trouth that is in woman fene,
And all without the mew is peinted grene,
In which were peinted all thife falfe foules,
As ben thife tidifes, tercelettes, and owles,
And pies, on hem for to cry and chide,
Right for defpit were peinted hem befide.

℣. 10958. *velouettes blew*] Velvets, from the Fr. *velou*, *velouette*. See *Du Cange*, in v. *Villofa*, *Velluetum*.—I will juft add, that as *blew* was the colour of truth, [See *C. L.* 248,] fo *green* belonged to inconftancy: hence in a *ballade upon an inconftant lady* [among Stowe's additions to Chaucer's Works, p. 551, ed. *Urr.*] the burthen is—

Inftede of *blew* thus may ye were al *grene*.

℣. 10962. *thife tidifes*] The *tidife* is mentioned as an inconftant bird in *The Leg. of G. W.* ver. 154;

As doth the *tidif* for newefangelneffe.

Skinner fuppofes it to be the titmoufe; but he produces no authority for his fuppofition, nor have I any to oppofe to it.

℣. 10963, 4.] Are tranfpofed from the order in which they ftand in all the editt. and mff. that I have feen. Some of the beft

Thus lete I Canace hire hauk keping:
I wol no more as now fpeke of hire ring,
Til it come eft to purpos for to fain,
How that this faucon gat hire love again
Repentant, as the ftory telleth us,
By mediation of Camballus,
The kinges fone, of which that I you told;
But hennesforth I wol my proceffe hold
To fpeke of aventures and of batailles,
That yet was never herd fo gret mervailles.
First wol I tellen you of a Cambufcan,
That in his time many a citee wan;
And after wol I fpeke of Algarfif,
How that he wan Theodora to his wif,
For whom ful oft in gret peril he was,
Ne had he ben holpen by the hors of bras;
And after wol I fpeke of Camballo,
That fought in liftes with the brethren two

mff. however read—*And pies*—which rather countenances the tranfpofition. My only excufe for fuch a liberty muft be, that I cannot make any good fenfe of them in the common order.

℣. 10977, 8.] Are alfo tranfpofed, but upon the authority of mff. *A. C.* 1, and I believe fome others, though being fatisfied of the certainty of the emendation I have omitted to take a note of their concurrence. Ed. *Ca.* 2, agrees with thofe mff. According to the common arrangement old Cambufcan is to win Theodora to his wife, and we are not told what is to be the object of Algarfif's adventures.

℣. 10981. *of Camballo*] Mf. *A.* reads *Cabalo:* but that is not my only reafon for fufpecting a miftake in this name. It feems

For Canace, er that he might hire winne,
And ther I left I wol again beginne. 10984

* * * * * * * * * * *

clear from the context that the person here intended is (not *a brother* but) *a lover* of Canace;

> Who fought in listes with *the brethren two*
> For Canace, or that he might hire *winne*.

The brethren two are obviously the two brethern of Canace, who have been mentioned above, *Algarsif* and *Camballo*. In mss. *Ask.* 1, 2, it is—*hir brethren two*, which would put the matter out of all doubt. *Camballo* could not fight with himself.——Again, if this *Camballo* be supposed to be the brother of Canace, and to fight in defence of her with some two brethren who might be suitors to her, (according to Spenser's fiction) he could not properly be said to *winne* his sister, when he only prevented others from winning her.—The outline therefore of the unfinished part of this Tale, according to my idea, is nearly this; the conclusion of the story of the faucon,

> By mediation of *Camballus*,

with the help of the ring, the conquests of Cambuscan, the winning of Theodora by Algarsif, with the assistance of the horse of brass, and the marriage of Canace to some knight, who was first obliged to fight for her with her two brethren, a method of courtship very consonant to the spirit of ancient chivalry.

℣. 10984. *And ther I left*] After this verse, in ms. *C.* 1, and others, is the following note; "Here endeth The Squieres Tale "as meche as Chaucer made." The two lines which in the editt. and some mss. are made to begin a third part are wanting in all the best mss.;

> Apollo whirleth up his chare so hie
> Til that the god Mercurius house the slie.

They certainly have not the least appearance of belonging to this place. I should guess that they were originally scribbled by some vacant reader in the blank space which is commonly left at the end of this Tale, and afterwards transcribed as Chaucer's by some copist of more diligence than sagacity.

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END OF VOLUME THIRD.